EXCLUSIVE: Yvan Muller Q&A

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MOTORSPORT NEWS

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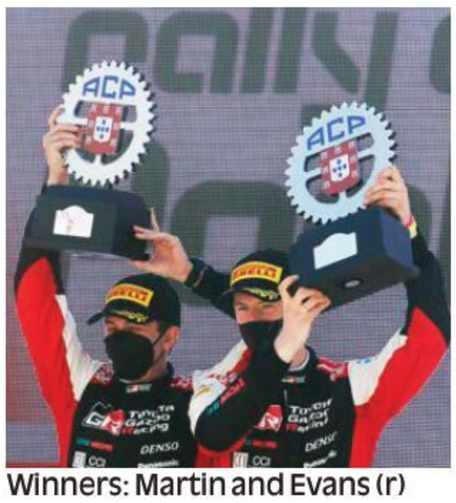
British touring car benchmark and World champion answers your questions p14

Toyota Gazoo Racing man ramps up his chase for his maiden global crown

ELFYN FLIES BACK INTO THE WRC TITLE FIGHT WITH RALLY PORTUGAL VICTORY



Winners: Martin and Evans (r)

By Graham Lister

Elfyn Evans battled his way firmly back into title contention with his first victory of the World Rally Championship season in Portugal last Sunday.

With Scott Martin co-driving, Evans took the lead when Ott Tanak dropped out with broken suspension on the penultimate stage of leg two.

Despite Tanak's Hyundai team-mate Dani Sordo narrowing his advantage to 10s starting the deciding day, Welshman Evans put his fourth win at WRC level beyond doubt by winning three of five event-closing stages.

Sordo admitted Evans had been too fast to catch and the Toyota driver is now two points behind his World champion team-mate Sebastien Ogier heading to next week's Rally Italy.

Gus Greensmith produced arguably the best performance of his WRC career to date with six top-three stage times for the M-Sport Ford World Rally Team. He finished fifth overall, while his fellow Mancunian Chris Ingram scored a first WRC3 podium.

Full story page 8
Full report page 18

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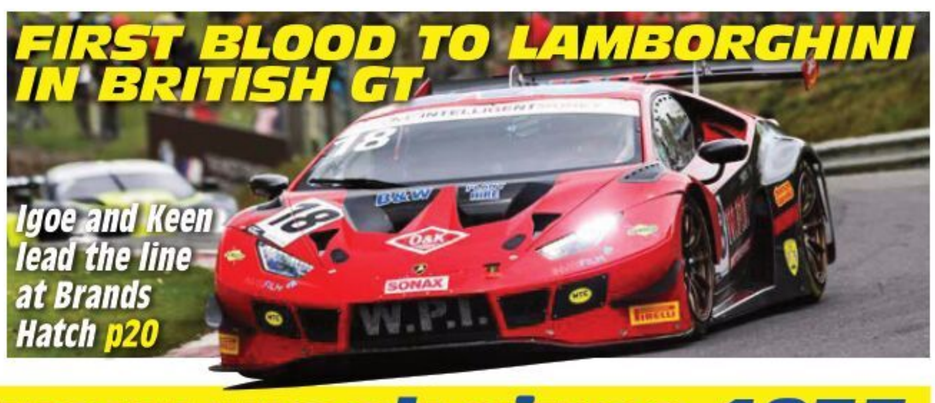
REPORT

MAX TURNS ON THE MAGIC IN MONACO

Dutchman dominates as Mercedes is in the wars p4

REPORT

FIRST BLOOD TO LAMBORGHINI IN BRITISH GT



Igoe and Keen lead the line at Brands Hatch p20

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COMMENT

Photo: Motorsport Images, Toyota Gazoo Racing, Jakob Ebrey, Hal Ridge

Elfyn Evans fended off pressure to claim the fourth win of his World rallying career

A WIN JUST AS IT WAS NEEDED

One of the important tools in any driver's armoury is the ability to bounce back. After missing out on victory on Rally Croatia by less than one second Elfyn Evans needed something special in Portugal to get his title trajectory back on track.

He delivered in spades in Matosinhos and powered to an unassailable lead on Sunday morning with some expert driving that even left his decorated team-mate Sebastien Ogier trailing in his wake.

It has pushed Evans to just two points away from the top of the points chase for the 2021 crown. The Toyota Gazoo Racing man showed no ill effects of his near miss in Croatia, and has also laid to rest any ghosts that might have been lurking after his narrow defeat to Ogier in last season's title battle.

It is just the sort of boost that can help the Welshman to feel more comfortable with his season and should give him the confidence to know that he can take on and beat the best in the world.

The best in the world, according to the Formula 1 points table right now, is Red Bull's Max Verstappen. His mastery at Monaco was sublime and rubbed salt into the wounds of the under-performing Mercedes team and particularly Lewis Hamilton. Merc and Lewis have rarely been so much on the back foot, and it will be intriguing to see how the Silver Streamroller reacts when the spotlight is on. It is another subplot in what is turning out to be a great season for grand prix racing.

The incumbent of our readers' question-and-answer session this week is Yvan Muller, a man well known to UK fans thanks to his eight-year stint at the very forefront of the British Touring Car Championship. It ultimately resulted in him winning the 2003 crown before he once again proved his credentials on the global stage and he became a four-time world beater.

He is now 51, but Muller is as sharp as ever as he reflects on a varied career. Never one to shirk a challenge, he took on the Dakar Rally and also set some head-turning stage times during some sporadic appearances in the World Rally Championship too. One thing Muller has never been short of is an opinion, as you can read in his revealing answers which start on page 14.

Graham Keilloh brings you all the action from the opening British GT rounds of the season at Brands Hatch, and we also look ahead to the start of the 5 Nations British Rallycross season too. Plus, all the national racing reports from last weekend are here. Enjoy.

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MOTORSPORT NEWS

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IN THIS ISSUE

Red Bull hits the jackpot in Monaco

Verstappen vaults to the lead of the drivers' championship

P4

P8

Good Evans lays down a marker

Welshman powers through Rally Portugal to secure storming win

P14

Readers' Q&A: Yvan Muller

The Frenchman who bestrode the tin-top world speaks out

P20

Lambo earns bragging rights at Brands

Igoe and Keen dodge the showers to power to British GT triumph

Report: Monaco GP 4
News: Racing 5
News: Rallying 8
News: Historics 12
Q&A: Yvan Muller 14
Report: Rally Portugal 18
Report: British GT 20
Preview: British Rallycross 24
Reports: National racing 25
What's on/readers photos 27

P24

Preview: British Rallycross ready to go!

FOR MOTORSPORT NEWS STAFF CONTACT DETAILS PLEASE SEE P27

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FORMULA 1 REPORT: MONACO

Photos: Motorsport Images

Verstappen powered away at the start

Sainz led the line for Ferrari in second place

MAX TURNS UP THE HEAT WITH A MASTERCLASS IN MONTE CARLO

Mercedes left floundering as Red Bull grabs its chances on the streets

Max now leads the points

By James Roberts

Victory in the Monaco Grand Prix has given Max Verstappen the lead in the Formula 1 drivers' table for the first time in his career.

It was a commanding performance from the Red Bull star who benefited when his closest challenger was eliminated before the start. The Dutchman now has a four-point margin over Lewis Hamilton after five races this year.

While Verstappen was in second place on the dirtier side of the road, there was no-one in front of him at 1500hrs on Sunday, as pole position holder Charles Leclerc failed to make it onto the grid. After crashing in the dying moments of qualifying the previous day, Leclerc's red-flag inducing accident meant no other driver – including a furious Verstappen – could beat his time.

Despite a check of the Ferrari on Sunday morning, Leclerc nervously left the pitlane for the grid and instantly felt a problem at the rear of his car. A fault with the left-rear driveshaft was incurable and a despondent Leclerc conceded the chances of a famous home win were over.

With one threat eliminated, Verstappen knew that he had to repel any attack from Mercedes' Valtteri Bottas on the run down to Turn 1. As the five red lights went out, Verstappen suffered with wheelspin and immediately moved to the inside to cover the Mercedes. Bottas lifted and settled for second place. Behind him, as the field roared up the hill on the opening lap, Carlos Sainz was third ahead of Lando Norris, Pierre Gasly, the lowly-starting Hamilton, Sebastian Vettel and Sergio Perez.

During the opening stages of the race the leaders were running conservatively, looking after their soft tyres until their one and only pitstop. Unusually, this year's edition of the Monaco Grand Prix was a low-key affair, rather than a crash-strewn lottery that can sometimes occur. Remarkably, the Aston Martin safety car remained parked in the pits all afternoon.

Across the weekend Mercedes had struggled with its tyres and – unlike Ferrari – was unusually off the pace. By lap 25, Bottas reported his left-front was particularly worn and had dropped to nearly five seconds behind the race leader. On lap 29 his team-mate Hamilton pitted but, rather than benefiting from an early stop, he remained stuck behind Gasly (who pitted a lap later) and was leapfrogged by Vettel's Aston Martin. Things didn't fare any better when Perez put in a series of ultra quick laps in clean air and was able to emerge in fourth ahead of Vettel, Gasly and a frustrated Hamilton.

Mercedes' afternoon went from bad to worse when second-placed Bottas came in for his stop on lap 30. Three wheels were changed in customary ultra-quick fashion, but the right front stubbornly wouldn't come off. The wheelnut had been machined onto the axle and Bottas' race was over. Rules stipulating two compounds of tyre must be used curtailed his grand prix instantly.

"It was so long I couldn't believe it," said Bottas. "I don't think I've ever had my race end in a pitstop before. It's hugely disappointing."

Sainz and Norris were the beneficiaries of Bottas' misfortune and inherited second and third places. Despite the Ferrari attempting to apply some pressure on Verstappen in the latter stages, the Red Bull driver had everything under control.

It was less measured in the cockpit of Norris' Gulf-liveried McLaren who told his engineer that his car was "awful on these tyres" and had 20 laps to keep the hard-charging Perez at bay. The British driver did manage to hold on to scoop his second podium of the season and his performance was made sweeter on lap 52 when he lapped his team-mate Daniel Ricciardo, passing him out of Saint Devote with a wave of his hand.

In the closing laps, Hamilton pitted again for a fresh set of soft tyres. A bonus point for scoring the fastest lap was a small consolation after a difficult Monaco and an 18-point swing to his rival Verstappen in the World championship battle.

"It's not been a great weekend," said Hamilton. "There is a lot we could have done to be better prepared, but it's not good enough from all of us. Every little point can hopefully count towards something in the end."

World champion Hamilton was left dejected with seventh spot

F1 RESULTS

MONACO GRAND PRIX
Laps: 78 Distance: 161.74 miles

	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Max Verstappen	Red Bull-Honda	1h38m56.820s
2	Carlos Sainz	Ferrari	+8.968s
3	Lando Norris	McLaren-Mercedes	+19.427s
4	Sergio Perez	Red Bull-Honda	+20.490s
5	Sebastian Vettel	Aston Martin-Mercedes	+52.591s
6	Pierre Gasly	AlphaTauri-Honda	+53.896s
7	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes	+1m08.231s
8	Lance Stroll	Aston Martin-Mercedes	-1 lap
9	Esteban Ocon	Alpine-Renault	-1 lap
10	Antonio Giovinazzi	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	-1 lap

11 Kimi Raikkonen (Alfa Romeo-Ferrari) -1 lap; 12 Daniel Ricciardo (McLaren-Mercedes) -1 lap; 13 Fernando Alonso (Alpine-Renault) -1 lap; 14 George Russell (Williams-Mercedes) -1 lap; 15 Nicolas Latifi (Williams-Mercedes) -1 lap; 16 Yuki Tsunoda (AlphaTauri-Honda) -1 lap; 17 Nikita Mazepin (Haas-Ferrari) -3 laps; 18 Mick Schumacher (Haas-Ferrari) -3 laps; 19 Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes) 29 laps/wheel nut; 20 Charles Leclerc (Ferrari) 0 laps/driveshaft.
Championship standings: 1 Verstappen 105; 2 Hamilton 101; 3 Norris 56; 4 Bottas 47; 5 Perez 44; 6 Leclerc 40. **Constructors:** 1 Red Bull Racing 149; 2 Mercedes 148; 3 McLaren 80; 4 Ferrari 78; 5 Aston Martin 19; 6 AlphaTauri 18.

Off-form Mercedes lets constructors' points lead slip to Red Bull

Mercedes considers an off-form Monaco weekend to be an exception rather than a continuing trend as the team slipped from the top of the team standings for the first time since July 2018.

Lewis Hamilton could only manage seventh and his team-mate Valtteri Bottas was forced to retire, which has given Red Bull a one point advantage in the constructors' championship. The unique nature of the circuit also gave Ferrari a significant upturn in performance too.

"Monaco has never been a happy place for us," said Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff. "It's somehow ingrained in the DNA where our car goes well or not and the answers are not always easy to find."

Mercedes struggled to get its tyres into the correct operating window – a problem which has blighted the squad at street tracks in the past.

"You build a car for 23 races and there will be outliers where you underperform," added Wolff. "At Monaco you need a different car to the average tracks."

Briton Norris targets wins and titles with new McLaren deal

Monaco podium finisher Lando Norris is targeting race wins and titles with McLaren after signing a new long-term deal.

The Woking team has acted fast to snap up the 21-year-old until the end of the 2023 season. Norris secured third place at Monaco, which was his second podium of the year. It was a sweet race for the Brit as he lapped his team-mate Daniel Ricciardo and moved to third place overall in the drivers' championship.

"I'm happy to stay with McLaren and for them to have faith in me and vice versa. We want to continue this story we are writing but also I want to achieve that end goal of winning races and championships with them," said Norris. "We've had a good few years together and have progressed a lot. I love where I am with the team and we work well together. I want to continue that for many more years."

Podium finisher Norris has secured his future with McLaren

FERRARI TO EXPLORE REASONS BEHIND LECLERC'S NON-START IN MONACO

Team chiefs say failure was not related to Saturday session after crash into the barriers

Photos: Motorsport Images, Drew Gibson/Aston Martin, George McNeill

Leclerc was unable to start after smash

By Matt James

Ferrari bosses have said that Charles Leclerc's driveshaft problem at Monaco, which meant he was not able to take up pole position for the race in the principality, was not related to his sizeable crash at the end of the qualifying session.

A rejuvenated Ferrari set the pace in the latter stages of the timed session in Monte Carlo. Several drivers had taken to the track for a final run to improve their times but were thwarted by a red flag following the Monegasque driver's spill at the Swimming Pool section.

"We need to fully understand what happened," Ferrari boss Mattia Binotto told Sky Sports F1. "The failure is on the driveshaft into the hub on the left-hand side. So it's not a gearbox problem we had. The gearbox had been inspected [on the evening before the race], it has been reviewed, and I think the gearbox was OK for the race. What happened is on the opposite side compared to the accident. So it may be completely unrelated to the accident.

"But something which we need to carefully understand and analyse, and we have no answer right now."

Leclerc was left frustrated by the failure to start on a weekend when Ferrari was on the pace throughout all the pre-race sessions. Leclerc said he had brushed with the wall on his pole-winning lap, but took a bigger risk on the final tour which led to the crash. It evoked memories of Ferrari man Michael Schumacher's faux crash in the dying moments of qualifying in 2006. That, too, caused a red flag and the German was penalised and sent to the back of the grid.

Leclerc explained: "I took too much the inside on my fast lap – if you watch it, I think I touched the wall, too, but not as hard as on the second timed lap. I tried to go for a bit more on the second lap and I basically bounced it off. But it was a misjudgement

"I can tell you that if it was done on purpose, I would have done it a lot more cleverly and not gone at full speed into [the barrier] and risking breaking the gearbox. It was definitely not on purpose."

CROWDS EXPECTED FOR LONDON'S E-PRIX AT EXCEL IN JULY

Bosses of Formula E are in talks with the UK government over the size of the crowd when the electric-only category returns to London on July 24-25.

The category has run behind closed doors since the pandemic hit but organisers are now hopeful of opening up the gates once more. Formula E co-founder Alberto Longo says that the next four meetings, beginning with Puebla in Mexico on June 19-20, should all have fans in attendance.

He said: "Mexico to start with, we are going to have public, that's for sure. In New York, we are going to have public as well – up to a 33% of the total capacity of the event. Hopefully in Berlin as well. I was even speaking with the mayor, he asked me for a little bit of time in order to decide how many people could attend."

Longo said he would be led by the UK Government and its roadmap on the number of fans who could attend the race at ExCeL London. He added: "Obviously, the rules of engagement are going to be published by the government in June."

Gunn: helping star search

ASTON MARTIN RENEWS STAR SEARCH

Fifteen new racers have signed up to the latest Aston Martin Racing Driver Academy as the marque renews its search to uncover the next GT endurance stars.

Drivers aged between 17 and 26 with Vantage GT3 and GT4 race programmes in recognised championships are eligible and Ross Gunn, Tom Canning and Valentin Hasse-Clot are previous graduates.

Gunn and Hasse-Clot are on this year's judging panel alongside two-time Le Mans winner Jonny Adam. The prize for this year's successful graduate includes financial support towards a 2022 race programme plus tailored factory assistance and guidance.

DIXON IN THE DARK ABOUT INDY 500 POLE POSITION

Scott Dixon has claimed his fourth Indianapolis 500 pole position for this weekend's event and says that he had a hair-raising time to set the his four-lap run's benchmark speed.

The Chip Ganassi Racing Dallara-Honda driver notched a four-lap average speed of 231.685mph to see off competition from Colton Herta, Rinus VeeKay and Ed Carpenter to claim the top slot for the race he won in 2008.

Kiwi Dixon said he didn't want to know details of changes to his car before the run.

He said: "I was able to watch Colton's four laps, too: wish I hadn't before I went out. I knew his consistency was probably going to be a tick better than the other two, and it sure was.

"For our car you're kind of just guessing [at downforce levels]. I could see the mechanics working on the car as we rolled through, adjusting the wings.

"I asked them not to tell me – I knew it was only going one way, and that was trimming out more! I knew they were going to be pretty aggressive because we had already started pretty aggressive."

Dixon has scored pole start

LEGENDS TO HOLD McCOSH TRIBUTE PARADE

The Legends Cars National Championship will hold a tribute parade for popular late racer Gerard McCosh at next month's Brands Hatch meeting.

At the Legends' spiritual Brands home on Sunday June 6, ahead of the meeting's first Legends race, the full 34-car entry is set for a two-lap parade led by McCosh's #69 car. The car – featuring McCosh's mascot passenger Napoleon the cuddly toy pig – will be driven by McCosh's friend Andrew Donald who heads the Scottish Legends category. McCosh's partner Jane Harley and two daughters Millie and Claudia will also be present. McCosh passed away in February after a long battle with cancer.

"It's going to be unbelievably emotional, and I doubt there will be a dry eye in the house when everyone sees Gerard's car lead the parade – with Napoleon onboard as he always was", said championship owner Phil Cooper.

"It will be an incredible sight and I'm so, so pleased Gerard's partner Jane and Millie and Claudia will be with us as we give Gerard the send-off he deserves. He was a wonderful competitor, a fantastic friend and an absolute gentleman."

McCosh's car – and Napoleon – will lead the tribute parade

IN BRIEF

Hoy at Open

Olympic legend Sir Chris Hoy in a Revolution A-One is set to join over 20 drivers for this Saturday's inaugural Silverstone Open 'Unlimited Prototype' double header. The event is organised by the Sports Prototype Cup's promoter and Duqueine, Ligier, Radical, Gunn, MCR and CTR are also set to be present in the diverse field.

Wales delay

The resumption of circuit racing in Wales has received a setback with the 750 Motor Club's planned June 19-20 meeting at Anglesey being rescheduled for August 21-22, due to the Welsh Government's ongoing Covid restrictions. Similarly, the British Truck Racing Championship June 19-20 Pembrey meeting has been cancelled.

Morris outings

British GT champion Seb Morris made his debut in the 24H Series at the 12 hours of Hockenheim last weekend after agreeing a three-event deal with Leipert Motorsport to be its Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Pro driver. Morris also last month raced at the Nordschleife in a Walkenhorst BMW M2 for the Nurburgring Endurance Series' season-opener, taking sixth in class.

Bearman boost

German and Italian Formula 4 race-winner Oliver Bearman will compete part-time in British Formula 3 with Fortec Motorsport this year. Bearman, 16, will combine selected F3 rounds with existing German and Italian F4 commitments. Bearman's presence ensured a 19-car entry for last weekend's Brands Hatch season-opener, the championship's largest round-one entry since 2016.

King continues reign

Reigning Porsche Carrera Cup GB champion Harry King started 2021 in similar all-conquering fashion to last year with two Red Bull Ring wins guesting in Porsche Carrera Cup Benelux. King, 20, is competing in the Porsche Supercup this season, starting last weekend supporting the Monaco Grand Prix, and also will defend his Carrera title.

Foster flies

Louis Foster continued his solid start to his 2021 Euroformula Open campaign with two Paul Ricard podiums. Multiple British Formula 3 winner Foster, 17, sits third in the standings after two of the eight rounds. "Given how little I knew about the track and I'm at a slight disadvantage as a rookie, it was a decent weekend," he said.

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RACING NEWS

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Ollie Read

MULTIPLE CHAMPION TF SPORT BACK IN BRITISH GT FOR SILVERSTONE 500

Eastwood won Le Mans with TF

Famous squad returns to championship's GT3 contest for blue-riband event with two Aston Vantages

Powerhouse TF's British GT3 return

By Graham Keilloh

Multiple-champion TF Sport is returning to British GT competition at next month's flagship Silverstone round with two GT3 Aston Martin Vantages led by the marque's factory drivers.

Charlie Eastwood with Giacomo Petrobelli plus Marco Sorensen alongside Bonamy Grimes will form Pro-Am pairings with TF at British GT's three-hour Silverstone 500.

TF boss Tom Ferrier told Motorsport News: "Both Bon and Giacomo wanted to do some guests races this season, and with Giacomo having done this event last year, and Bonamy wanting to give the new GT3 a go, British GT's blue-riband event made a lot of sense!

"We know the Aston GT3 performs well around the GP circuit and we were on pole for British GT in both GT3 and GT4 in 2019. A podium for either car is certainly achievable."

TF won 2019's GT3 drivers' title and 2018's teams' contest. It withdrew its 2020 full-season GT3 entries due to Covid, though raced a GT3 Vantage in Silverstone's season closer with Tom Canning alongside Petrobelli. TF has no 2021 full-season British GT entries, though Ferrier told MN it has "some more announcements to make soon".

All four drivers are familiar to TF. Eastwood won Le Mans' 2020 GTE Am contest and 2019's Blancpain Pro-Am championship with the team while twice World Endurance Championship GTE Pro champion Sorensen completed a full British GT3 season with TF in 2018. Experienced LMP3 and GT competitor Grimes, who currently leads Britcar's points table, raced with TF in the 2018-19 Asian Le Mans Series.

Teenage racers at soaking Croft "a credit to motorsport"

FIESTA JUNIOR YOUNGSTERS IMPRESS BRSCC BOSS

British Racing and Sports Car Club chairman Peter Daly has paid tribute to the skills shown by the club's young Fiesta Junior drivers in the recent sodden Croft race.

Deagen Fairclough earlier this month took both season-opener wins in the 14-to-17 year olds' championship.

"The driving standards are a credit to motorsport," Daly told Motorsport News. "We had a very tricky second race in very wet conditions. Apart from a few errant spinners, which you'll always get in very wet circumstances, the youngsters delivered a fabulous race that many other championships could learn from."

Fiesta Junior entries dropped to four in 2019 but have since transformed with 15 racing at Croft and more anticipated for next month's Oulton Park meeting. Fiesta Junior coordinator Laura Payne in recognition of her work has received BRSCC's 2020 Bert Lamkin Memorial Salver.

"We've reignited it over the last 12 months," Daly added on the junior category, "we had to turn a couple of drivers away [for Croft] because we hadn't got enough cars. We're working on having 18 cars ready for the next round.

"We've put a huge amount of effort into that, and we've now got a very high-level social media programme which includes an ongoing behind-the-scenes Facebook documentary."

OBITUARY

Ray Allen
1943-2021

Motorsport News was sad to learn of the passing of Ray Allen earlier this month aged 77 after a lengthy illness.

Allen was the winner of the first-ever standalone Formula Ford race, at Brands Hatch on July 2, 1967, driving a Motor Racing Stables-entered Lotus 51. Allen's career was indeed closely linked with Brands, its resident MRS school, and its famous Motor Circuit Developments boss John Webb.

Allen, who began racing in 1966, was a star MRS pupil and in 1970 dominated MCD's inaugural Formula 100 championship that Webb conceived as FF1600's sportscar equivalent. Allen the following year won three Formula Atlantic races and was competitive in Formula 5000 in the early seventies. He also raced in Formula 1 non-championship races, finishing sixth in 1971's Race of Champions.

Allen later worked as an MRS instructor and also presided over the Historic Sports Car Club's 2017 FF1600 celebration, 50 years to the day after his history making victory.

Allen took first FF1600 victory

The next Mills generation was immediately on the FF1600 pace

MILLS JR IMPRESSES ON FF1600 RACING DEBUT

Tom Mills, son of Formula Ford team boss Kevin, impressed on his FF1600 debut days after his 16th birthday with second place in Silverstone's Jim Walsh Trophy.

Karting graduate Mills had only three days' experience of Kevin Mills Racing's Spectrum, at Kirkistown last August, before Silverstone's Friday testing that was two days after his 16th birthday.

Mills, despite ever-changing conditions, took fifth place in race one then a close second in race two after leading. He'll now complete the National FF1600 season's remainder.

"I've grown up around it, I've been living in Formula Ford world for years and years now, it was always the plan to go there," Mills told Motorsport News.

"I was just waiting for my birthday really! I couldn't get out anywhere, Covid stopped any plans of going back to Kirkistown or anything like that.

"I didn't think I'd be that close [to the pace]. I thought it would be a great result to finish in the top 10. And then on the test day straight away I [thought] maybe a top five! [The result was] a shock to me and everyone really."

CITYCAR CUP STUDENT CONTEST DELAYED TO 2022

The Student Motorsport Challenge, allowing colleges and universities to compete alongside regular competitors within the CityCar Cup, has had its debut delayed a year due to Covid's impact on educators.

The programme, announced last December initially for 2021, is a partnership between the British Racing and Sports Car Club and Student Motorsport to offer practical learning within the new entry-level CityCar Cup contest.

"[In] the new year we had a number of interested parties, but it was very very crippling for educators because they couldn't get in," Student Motorsport founder John Paul Latham told Motorsport News. "They've got to get them [students] through their studies, they weren't even studying, seeing tutors or getting involved in projects.

"What was good was it gave us more time to develop and think about and rationalise what we're doing. The interest was still great.

"Now we have one college signed up, they've got a donor car, we're in conversation with a number of other colleges and universities about it and we've got some really cracking quotes from people wanting to get involved. We have 11 or so colleges with intent to enter."

Student challenge looking to 2022

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RALLY NEWS

DEVINE SIGNS UP FOR EUROPEAN RALLY ATTACK

Callum Devine is set for a second European Rally Championship season.

Although the Motorsport Ireland-backed driver has been keeping his plans for 2021 under wraps, his entry on this weekend's Polish championship opener has raised the prospect of Devine returning to the ERC.

Rally Zemaitija, which takes place in neighbouring Lithuania, offers gravel stages similar to those found on Rally Poland, which opens the ERC season from June 18-20. It is understood Devine will compete in Lithuania in a Ford Fiesta Rally2 and then return to the region for his Rally Poland debut. Fellow Irishman James Fulton will co-drive.

MORE DATE SWITCHES FOR EURO CALENDAR AS EVENTS SWAPPED AROUND

The European championship's flagship Azores Rallye is set to take place from September 16-18 after plans for an October date faltered.

Motorsport News understood the postponed rally would be rescheduled to October 7-9 with Rally Hungary moving from late October to August to accommodate the change.

However, with Rally Hungary sticking to its October 22-24 date and Rally Fafe organisers requesting a one-week delay to October 1-3 due to local elections, the mid-September date became the only workable solution to fit the Azores into the calendar.

The new Fafe date clashes with Rally Finland WRC event, which ERC boss Jean-Baptiste Ley said was an "unavoidable consequence of the fluid nature of the calendar resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. We are convinced these two well established events taking place on opposite sides of Europe with a time difference of two hours will be extremely successful."

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase

Victory has boosted Evans's chances in the title chase

STANDINGS

After round 4/12

P	DRIVER	PTS
1	Sebastien Ogier (FRA)	79
2	**Elfyn Evans (GBR)**	**77**
3	Thierry Neuville (BEL)	57
4	Ott Tanak (EST)	45
5	Kalle Rovanpera (FIN)	41
6	Takamoto Katsuta (JPN)	36

EVANS POUNCES AS HYUNDAI HITS THE SKIDS TO CLOSE ON WRC LEAD

Hyundai boss Adamo pleased with pace in the i20, but loses out to flying Toyotas again

By Graham Lister

Toyota's Elfyn Evans heads to Rally Italy next week two points beneath the WRC title summit after rival squad Hyundai squandered a gilt-edged opportunity to take a podium lockout in Portugal.

Hyundai trio Thierry Neuville, Dani Sordo and Ott Tanak all had spells either leading or in the top two on the first gravel round of the season. But only Sordo completed the full quota of 20 stages, as Neuville and Tanak faltered when well placed.

Belgian Neuville was 8.2s behind Sordo in second when he rolled on the opening day's seventh stage. Then, with an advantage of 22.4s over Evans starting the penultimate stage of day two, Estonian Tanak's bid to become the first two-time winner of the season came unstuck when he stopped with damaged right-rear suspension.

Sordo gave Hyundai hope by closing to within 10.7s of Evans starting the final day, but the Spaniard – on his first start since January's Monte Carlo Rally and his first with new co-driver Borja Rozada – had no answer to the Welshman, who opened up a 26.2s margin prior to the powerstage following a trio of fastest times on Sunday morning.

While Evans and co-driver Scott Martin celebrated after coming out on top by 28.3s and landing a bonus point for going fifth quickest, Hyundai team chief Andrea Adamo reckoned his crestfallen outfit "deserved more".

The Italian said: "The opportunities were there for a strong team result but for different reasons we have not been able to do what we were capable of achieving. Now, we have to try and reinflate ourselves before the next event.

"All of my people have worked so hard in these past months, dealing with strict limitations and having to accept difficult circumstances, they deserved more from this rally. We have shown we have car performance so now we have to deliver results."

Hyundai's third defeat of 2021 to Toyota team – led by rookie boss and ex-WRC driver Jari-Matti Latvala – means it trails the Japanese firm by 37 points in the makes' title chase. Neuville is the best-placed Hyundai driver in third, 20 points down on Evans and 22 adrift of Evans' team-mate Sebastien Ogier, who finished third in Portugal behind Sordo.

Evans celebrated his fourth career win on Rally Portugal

FOURMAUX SHINES AGAIN AND EARNS PRAISE FOR POINTS

Malcolm Wilson praised Gus Greensmith and Adrien Fourmaux after they combined to give the British M-Sport team its best result of the season so far.

Brit Greensmith equalled his career personal best in fifth after setting six top-three stage times, while sixth-placed Rally of Portugal rookie Fourmax was twice in the top two times on his gravel debut in a World Rally Car.

"It's a very challenging event but they barely put a wheel wrong and set some hugely encouraging stage times, despite their lack of experience," Wilson said. "At M-Sport we've always prided ourselves on giving young drivers the chance to shine in the WRC and that's exactly what Gus and Adrien have done this weekend.

"They've both had to deal with difficult situations, but they never lost their composure and stuck to the objective we set them, namely to get through all the stages and show their speed and potential."

Wilson was back on team principal duty as cover for Richard Millener, who missed the event to attend the birth of his first child.

Meanwhile, Teemu Suninen will take over from Fourmaux in M-Sport's second Fiesta on Rally Italy with Fourmaux reverting to the team's lead WRC2 entry.

Brit Greensmith and team-mate Fourmaux ran strongly

CHAMP TANAK WAS IN THE SIGHTS FOR AN M-SPORT RETURN IN 2022

World champion Ott Tanak was a 2022 target for M-Sport, it has emerged.

The Estonian spent four full seasons with the Ford-supported Cumbria operation before his switch to Toyota for 2018.

M-Sport is aiming to land a big-name driver signing to lead it into the new hybrid-based Rally1 era and Tanak had been on its shortlist prior to the Estonian inking a long-term deal to remain with Hyundai, whom he joined in 2020.

"It was one of my targets to try to get Ott back for 2022," M-Sport head Malcolm Wilson said. "Unfortunately, we weren't successful. I fully understand his positioning and his reasoning."

With Tanak unavailable, Wilson admitted that Sebastien Ogier, who claimed two of his seven WRC titles with M-Sport, would appeal, but preferably as a full-season driver rather than under a partial programme, which is Ogier's preference.

"The priority for sure would be to try to get a top driver and do what we did back in 2017, 2018 [and win the title]," Wilson said. "If we can't achieve that and Sebastien does decide to do a limited programme it is something I would look at, we worked very well together in the past. But my main target is to try and get somebody who can lead the team for the whole season."

Asked by reporters in Portugal if there were other options, Wilson conceded that the driver market is "diminishing on a daily basis", but added that he would be prepared to promote from within the M-Sport ranks with drivers such as Adrien Fourmaux, Gus Greensmith and Teemu Suninen fitting the bill, depending on their progress in 2021.

"I still believe there are people out there who can lead the challenge," Wilson said. "We're still in discussion with various people but obviously we've got some good guys coming through. Everybody knows we've worked with young guys in the past. It's a particular part I enjoy so let's see what happens in the next couple of months."

Wilson also hinted that financial supported would be forthcoming from Ford to help secure a top-line driver.

Ott Tanak has decided to remain with the Hyundai team

BIRD "OPEN MINDED" ABOUT BRC DEBUT

Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship leader Frank Bird is remaining "open minded" about his British Rally Championship debut this weekend aboard a Ford Fiesta Rally2.

Bird, who usually drives a Focus WRC07, made his debut in the Rally2 on last month's Snetterton Stages and finished a close second behind Rhys Yates.

"I was pretty surprised by the pace on Snetteron so I was really happy in the car, pretty comfortable in the end," Bird told MN. "I think it will be difficult, there's a lot of competition but we'll see. I won't be driving the car between my last rally and Oulton Park so I'll be a bit rusty I think so see how it goes. I was feeling good in the car last time so hopefully we'll be right on the pace."

Asked whether his priority lay with the MNCRC or BRC, Bird said: "I think I'm going to struggle to do some of the other Circuit Championship rounds, hopefully I can do a few of the other stuff going on on other calendars so open minded really and see how we get on on the day."

Stephen Simpson, Kevin Procter and Mark Kelly join Bird in starting within the top 10 of the combined BRC and MNCRC field.

●*For a full BRC preview, see p11*

TOP 10 SEEDED ENTRY LIST

MN Circiut Rally

S	DRIVER	CO-DRIVER	CAR
1	Stephen Simpson	Patrick Walsh	Ford Fiesta R5
4	Frank Bird	Jack Morton	Fiesta Rally2
8	Kevin Procter	Derrick Fawcett	Fiesta S2000T
9	Mark Kelly	Neil Colman	Fiesta R5
14	Damian Cole	Dale Bowen	Skoda Fabia R5
16	James Yates	Tom Woodburn	Fiesta R5
21	Chris West	Keith Hounslow	Porsche 997 GT3
24	Paul Smith	Ellie Williams	Fiesta R5
25	Andy Scott	Marc Fowler	Fiesta S2000T
27	Graham Coffey	Luke Barry	Fiesta S2000T

Frank Bird: seeded second

CAVE UNSURE ON FULL SEASON IN BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIP CONTEST

The three-time British runner-up is trying to secure the funding for the next six rounds

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Kevin Glendenning, M-Sport

Cave has an uncertain future after BRC opener

By Luke Barry

Tom Cave has told Motorsport News the prospect of him completing the rest of the British Rally Championship season after this weekend's opening round is unlikely.

Cave isn't on the entry for Monday's Neil Howard Stages at Oulton Park as he doesn't have the budget in place to commit to a full season.

The Welshman, who has finished as runner-up in the BRC three times, says he is still "very motivated and passionate about trying to do an event or two if we can this year."

He told MN: "We're working on things still, whether it would be for the rest of the BRC is probably highly unlikely. Maybe the odd event here and there, if we do get a budget together we'll probably just pick and choose events to do and go and target them but being honest with you now at the moment there's nothing in place. It's very much up in the air. Hopefully we can do some events and you'll see us out there at some point during the year."

Cave's regular co-driver Dale Furniss will compete with Desi Henry on the opening round but has assured Cave that he will return to partner him if plans begin to align. If Cave can't secure a bigger BRC programme, the Nicky Grist Stages, Trackrod and Cambrian Rallies would be of particular interest for one-off outings.

"Nicky Grist is probably top of the list because it's in south Wales, it's an event I've done before on stages I know well and the Trackrod as well is an event I've won before, I really enjoy the rally and I've never been there in a four-wheel-drive car so I've always wanted to go and do that one again," Cave said.

"And the Cambrian up in north Wales as well. So if we had options to do those rallies those are ones we'd choose to do, but that's very much far away at the moment."

SIMPSON'S SKODA R5 OUTING LIKELY TO BE A ONE-OFF

BTRDA regular Tony Simpson has revealed the works-inspired livery that will adorn his Skoda Fabia R5 on Monday's Neil Howard Stages; his first ever start in an R5 car.

Sporting an orange and white colour scheme which he says is "a tip of the hat" to the works Skoda livery with the green replaced with orange.

Simpson's deal to drive a Skoda is a poignant as his son's favourite rally car is a Skoda Fabia S2000. He was originally going to drive a Proton Iriz R5 at Oulton Park but when the event was postponed from November to May, his plans changed. He will test the Skoda for the first time today (May 27).

"It is such a fabulous deal that was too good to say no to," Simpson told MN. "I would've been excited to drive any R5 car but the Skoda has come about and I'm really looking forward to driving it. With my relationship with MRF, I've been privy to the sexy ERC tyres so hopefully I'll be able to do those justice, but we are quite literally going into an R5 lion's den in the United Kingdom on this event."

The Skoda has a version of works livery

Simpson thinks MRF tyres will be a boost

The Nicky Grist Stages has tempted Frank Kelly to Wales

BABY BLUE WAS ALMOST SET FOR SCOTLAND INSTEAD OF WALES

Frank Kelly and his famous 'Baby Blue' Ford Escort Mk2 were almost destined for a return to Scottish rallying before the Northern Irishman decided to enter the Welsh Rally Championship instead.

Kelly contested a full SRC season in 2009, winning his class on the Merrick Stages, a year after entering the BTRDA Rally Series.

The last rally he did on the mainland UK was in 2010 but Kelly and daughter Lauren will return in 2021.

"I suppose like everybody we got fed up of waiting for rallying to come to us," he told The Stage By Stage live show, hosted by former professional co-driver Trevor Agnew. "We've had a couple offers around Europe but I'm very wary of committing to something like that and then maybe another lockdown comes.

"But when I saw on Facebook the Welsh championship putting up a calendar starting with the Nicky Grist [Stages] on July 10 I thought 'that looks good'. The last time I was there was 2008 when we did the BTRDA championship and I always promised myself to go back, and it just never happened. We registered from the championship, got a great response from them and it moved from there.

"We actually looked at Scotland as well and it was a toss-up, Scotland or Wales," Kelly added. "Scotland is probably a little bit easier travel-wise and I was still in two minds and then we entered Argyll Rally and we didn't even get on the reserve list so that sort of made my mind up for me, we'll go Wales. So Wales here we come."

Kelly's first event of the year will be the M-Sport Stages on July 3-4, a week before the Nicky Grist Stages.

WIDENED M-SPORT EVENT AGAIN PROVES POPULAR

The second M-Sport Stages event at Greystoke due to take place on July 3-4) has once again attracted a strong entry.

Entry into the 2020 first Return to Rallying event was reserved exclusively for M-Sport-built machinery but this year's has been widened slightly to incorporate all Ford rally cars. As a result, more than 20 rear-wheel-drive Escorts of varying specifications have entered the event including for Frank Kelly, Shane McGirr and Ben Friend. The four-wheel-drive entry has been similarly strong as several drivers who started last year's rally return this year. Rhys Yates, Tom Williams and Joe McGonigle bring the latest Ford Fiesta Rally2, Stephen Petch and Josh Moffett headline the Fiesta WRC runners while Garry Jennings is among the brigade representing the Fiesta R5 model.

Five entries have been reserved by M-Sport and are yet to be disclosed. Last year, Matthew Wilson brought the latest Fiesta WRC to Greystoke while his father Malcolm drove his Escort Mk2 as the event's course car.

Malcolm Wilson enjoyed his 2020 run in Greystoke Forest

Advertising enquiries: 01732 446757

RALLY NEWS

Petch: fresh impetus

PETCH CHOSE BRC TO AVOID BEING "STUCK IN A RUT"

BTRDA regular Stephen Petch has opted to switch to the British Rally Championship as he "realised I was stuck in a rut".

Petch, the 2017 Gold Star title winner, has contested every BTRDA season since 2013 and was leading the series after two rounds last year in his Ford Fiesta WRC before Covid-19 cancelled the championship. This season, Petch and Michael Wilkinson have entered the BRC National series with their campaign kicking off with Monday's Neil Howard Stages.

"The break really made me look at everything differently and I very quickly realised I was stuck in a rut," Petch said. "They are great rallies, but it's very much the same old, same old so I needed to look at different events to do.

"The [BRC] calendar works well and although Tarmac is not my preferred surface, I need to do more of it really," he added.

"The car loves every surface you put it on and I`ll be pushing on when I feel comfortable. It will be great to enjoy something different this season."

BATH MOTOR CLUB NETS ENVIRONMENTAL RECOGNITION AWARD

Bath Motor Club has become the first national organisation to claim the Motorsport UK Environmental Sustainability award.

The club has managed all of its environmental aspects including offsetting all its vehicle CO2 emissions and heading for net zero carbon ahead of the UK Government's own targets.

BMC is working in partnership with local organisation Co-forest to buy and plant new permanent forestry in areas near to Bath. The first of these is known as Acorn, and club members intend to volunteer and plant some of their trees themselves.

David Whittock, Bath Motor Club chairman, said: "We believe we can make a difference without interrupting or changing the basics of our sport.

"With lockdown last year, it gave us time to think about it, which led to us making a commitment to push and implement our environmental sustainability management system."

BUTTON TO STAND DOWN FROM XE DRIVE IN SENEGAL TO FOCUS ON TEAM

Timmy Hansen to race for the JBXE squad before F1 champ returns in Greenland

Photos: Extreme E, HaL Ridge, Jakob Ebrey

JBXE team will have a new line-up

By Hal Ridge

World Rallycross event winner Kevin Hansen will replace 2009 Formula 1 World champion Jenson Button in the JBXE Racing squad for the second round of the Extreme E series in Senegal this weekend.

Button, who raced alongside team-mate Mikaela Ahlin-Kottulinsky in the first-ever XE event in Saudi Arabia last month, will focus on his role as team principal for the series' second round.

Hansen, younger brother of 2019 World RX champion Timmy Hansen – who races for the Andretti United squad in XE and finished on the podium in the opening round with Catie Munnings – has raced a rallycross Supercar since 2016.

He claimed the European Rallycross Championship title, a World RX event win in Abu Dhabi and Nitro RX victory in 2019.

He has been part of the XE Drivers' Programme since the concept's inception and has good experience of the single-make ODYSSEY 21 machine.

"I'm delighted to announce that an opportunity has arisen for Kevin to compete for JBXE in Senegal," said Button. "I'm obviously wearing two hats with JBXE as both a driver, but also team owner, and it's the latter which means having the opportunity to put Kevin in the car for this race was one I didn't want to pass up. He's an exciting driver and I can't wait to see him representing JBXE in Senegal and I look forward to being back behind the wheel in Greenland."

Kevin Hansen will step in

Hansen said: "I've been so involved in developing the car since the beginning, from the early testing programme right to Aragon last year, so to get this opportunity now with Jenson is so nice and I'm super excited to get to Senegal and see what I can do."

WORLD RX TWEAKED IN AN EFFORT TO LURE FANS BACK

The opening round of the World Rallycross Championship has been postponed and will now take place at Barcelona, Spain on July 23-24.

The Hell circuit in Norway had been set to host the season opener next month but that round has been cancelled due of Covid-19 restrictions in the country. The second round was pencilled to take place in Sweden, but the Holjes round has now moved from its traditional July date until mid-August in a bid to allow fans to attend, an objective for all rounds for new World RX commercial rights holder, Rallycross Promoter GmbH.

A statement from the promoter read: "Following close consultation with event organisers and the relevant authorities in each of the host countries, an updated calendar has been put together that not only visits some of the best rallycross tracks in the world, but also maximises the likelihood of welcoming fans on-site where possible."

The Montalegre circuit in Portugal, last run in the series in 2018, will return to the roster to host the final round, while the Nurburgring will hold its maiden World RX event just a week after the season-opener in Spain.

"We all acknowledge the positive trend over the summer of the pandemic in Europe," said Rallycross Promoter GmbH executive director Arne Dirks. "That's why, after having liaised closely with our key stakeholders, we have taken the deliberate decision to delay the start of the campaign in the hope of being able to open the gates to fans at as many rounds as is feasible and safe, and have assembled what we believe is an irresistible blend of iconic rallycross tracks and state-of-the-art modern venues."

CALENDAR

2021 World Rallycross

RND	VENUE	DATE
1	Barcelona, Spain	July 23-24
2	Nurburgring, Germany	July 31
3	Nurburgring, Germany	Aug 1
4	Holjes, Sweden	Aug 20-22
5	Loheac, France	Sep 3-5
6	Riga, Latvia	Sept 18-19
7	Spa, Belgium	Oct 8-10
8	Montalegre, Portugal	Oct 23-24

The Portuguese round will complete the 2021 campaign

Max Langmaid will switch his focus to Junior rallycross

TEENAGER JOINS JUNIOR HUNT AND RELISHES SPA

Sixteen-year-old Max Langmaid will make his debut in the Motorsport UK Junior Rallycross Championship this weekend at Lydden Hill as part of the 5 Nations BRX season opener at the Kent circuit.

Former Ministox racer Langmaid has rallycross experience having campaigned a Suzuki Swift in the BTRDA Clubmans Rallycross Championship in the two previous campaigns, and finished fourth overall last year. He will race a new car at Lydden Hill this weekend.

He said: "Like most drivers I have always aspired to race in British RX but never thought it would be achievable. The thought of being in the paddock with the best rallycross drivers and the best rallycross cars and knowing I'm a part of it makes me really excited."

Langmaid has been accepted onto a motorsport course at Bridgwater College which he will begin later this year.

The Devon driver is also looking forward to racing at the Spa-Francorchamps circuit in Belgium for the British series' finale.

"It's all about Spa for me: Eau Rouge looks fast and I can't wait to drive it," he said. "Like all rallycross tracks, the technical elements of the mixed surfaces on one circuit is exciting to watch and drive."

PREVIEW: BRC 2021

BRITISH RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP SET FOR EMPHATIC RETURN

After a 15-month layoff, the 2021 British Rally Championship is looking more open than ever. By Luke Barry

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, SMJ Photography

Last season's British Rally Championship line-up was not lacking in quality but was a little light on numbers. There can be no such concerns for 2021 however, as that quality has been backed up by quantity.

Fourteen drivers will start round one in the top class, and more are expected throughout the season.

The list of contenders reads like a who's who of British and Irish rallying. With the discipline still at a standstill in Ireland, several big names from the Emerald Isle have thrown their hats into the ring; namely both Sam and Josh Moffett, Desi Henry, Joe McGonigle and James Wilson. All five are capable of upsetting the applecart, but of the quintet it's the Moffett brothers who will be striking the most fear into the BRC establishment.

That establishment is headed by double and reigning champion Matt Edwards – the somewhat forgotten man after he announced his plans earlier than most – who will be vying for a record-breaking third consecutive title in 2021. There has been movement in the Edwards camp though as he switches from the Ford Fiesta Rally2 to a Volkswagen Polo GTI R5. Will 2021 be the hardest BRC title quest he's faced yet?

"It's hard to say if it's going to be the hardest because you only need one person to make it difficult," Edwards replies. "If you're losing it doesn't matter if it's one or 15 [people ahead of you], so it's 100% [push] regardless. It only takes one to get in the way. I wouldn't say it's any more or less difficult than it has been, the difficulty for me is getting back into it after so long with no prep basically. That's my biggest concern at the minute."

The opening round on Monday is something unique as it will be held entirely within the confines of a racetrack: Oulton Park. From there things become more traditional with trips to the Nicky Grist Stages, Grampian Forest Stages, Trackrod Rally, Mull Rally, Cambrian Rally and finally the Ulster Rally in November.

Edwards is one of a few drivers who has experience of the Oulton Park stages, but he doesn't see that as an ace card to play. "I'd rather have done three rallies [in his new car] and never have been to Oulton Park than to have done Oulton Park and never driven the car," he says.

Potentially then the Neil Howard Stages represents the old adage of you can't win the championship, but you can certainly lose it. Edwards adds: "[A] podium is my hope so that we don't give away too much needlessly to start with. Damage limitation, it shouldn't be how we're starting but the way things have panned out that's the situation I'm. It's not a very positive outlook is it but it's a realistic stance based on what's in front of me!"

Edwards therefore appears more vulnerable than usual, and there's no shortage of predators eager to hunt him down. The two Ford Fiesta Rally2s seeded behind him on the entry list seem to be the two danger men: Rhys Yates and Frank Bird. Yates's rallying pedigree is well-known, Bird's less so, but the GT racer has proved incredibly adept at rallying and of course regularly competes on circuit events.

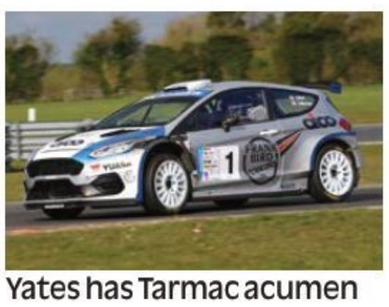
"It'll only be my second rally in the car so I won't be having too many expectations," Bird cautions, "but we'd obviously like to be challenging at the front. I did Oulton Park not last year but the year before and I broke down actually so only did half the day. A few of the guys have got a little bit of experience there but it'll be a great day with all the competition so I'm really looking forward to it."

Yates is yet to win a round of the BRC but many are tipping him to put that right this weekend, including the man himself. "The plan is the championship at the end of the day but for me I can't see any reason why we won't be going to that event, like any other event, to win it. It's as simple as that," he tells MN. "In the right environment I can be really competitive so it's just trying to get myself in that mindset really. My confidence is quite high in the car at the minute, I do feel good in the car so it's lining up to have a lot of pressure on my shoulders because I've got no excuse whatsoever to not go and win."

Oulton will host opener

Mellors will prove the Iriz

Edwards is going into the opening round on a journey



Yates has Tarmac acumen

ENTRY LIST

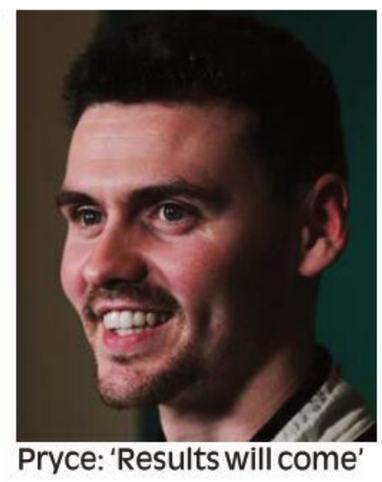
Seeded BRC1

SEED	DRIVER	CO-DRIVER	CAR
2	Matt Edwards	Darren Garrod	Volkswagen Polo GTI R5
3	Rhys Yates	James Morgan	Ford Fiesta Rally2
4	Frank Bird	Jack Morton Ford	Fiesta Rally2
5	Osian Pryce	Noel O'Sullivan	Volkswagen Polo GTI R5
6	Josh Moffett	Andy Hayes	Hyundai i20 R5
7	Sam Moffett	Keith Moriarty	Ford Fiesta Rally2
11	Ollie Mellors	Max Freeman	Proton Iriz R5
12	Desi Henry	Dale Furniss	Hyundai i20 R5
15	Nial Henry	Damien Duffin	Ford Fiesta R5
17	Marty McKenna	Kaine Treanor	Volkswagen Polo GTI R5
19	James Wilson	Arthur Kierans	Hyundai i20 R5
22	Joe McGonigle	Ciaran Geaney	Ford Fiesta Rally2
26	Seb Perez	Gary McElhinney	Ford Fiesta Rally2
34	Brendan Cumiskey	Ronan O Kane	Ford Fiesta R5

Looking to take the challenge to him will be Osian Pryce, who finally gets his hands on a Volkswagen Polo R5 for the BRC after agreeing a deal to use on last year's West Cork Rally – the first in a long line of events to end up cancelled by coronavirus.

Pryce tells Motorsport News: "I know there's some lads that have done the Circuit Championship like Rhys so they might have a bit of an advantage on the first one. The first one's going to suit some people and completely not suit other people so you'll have a mixed bag.

"I think you can either go at it and win it and try and get as many points as you can, or you can make sure you get some good points and put the hammer down later in the year. If Rhys is going to go strong on the first one, we know on the gravel, going off what we did on the Cambrian we should be strong."



Pryce: 'Results will come'

Ollie Mellors is another one of last year's frontrunners to reinstate his intent this time around and could be a real dark horse in the Proton.

And then there's Seb Perez, the son of former BRC competitor Steve who's giving rallying a proper go in an M-Sport-run Fiesta. Everywhere you look there's a contender for victory. And how great does it feel to say that in the present tense, and not the past? ■

CAN CREIGHTON BE CAUGHT?

William Creighton starts the Junior BRC season as the resounding favourite given his recent seat time on last weekend's Rally Portugal, but more importantly because of the pace he's displayed over the years in this category.

But it won't be a one-man show. Finlay Retson is a man to be feared – fresh from some seat time at Three Sisters Circuit, similar in style to Oulton – as is Ruairi Bell who returns to the JBRC after a year in the JWRC. In total, 13 drivers will fight for honours and the prize drive in a Hyundai i20N Rally2 next year.

While this year's JBRC has opened back out to allow any R2 or Rally4 car, all but one driver (Kyle White) will compete in a Fiesta Rally4. Rapid young Irishmen David Kelly and Brian Brady are worth watching as are Eddie Lewis and Elliot Payne.

Fraser Anderson and Johnnie Mulholland will duke it out for BRC Academy honours.

LEADING BRC ENTRIES

BRC

SEED	DRIVER	CO-DRIVER	CAR
41	William Creighton	Liam Regan	Ford Fiesta Rally4
45	Finlay Retson	Rhys Stoneman	Ford Fiesta Rally4
46	Ruairi Bell	Gareth Parry	Ford Fiesta Rally4
51	David Kelly	Dean O'Sullivan	Ford Fiesta Rally4
54	Brian Brady	Eamonn Creedon	Ford Fiesta Rally4

NATIONAL TITLE IS WIDE OPEN AS COMPETITION RAMPS UP

The National section of the BRC has at times felt a bit pointless, but not in 2021.

A seriously competitive line-up has been attracted this year, headed by 2013 Irish Tarmac champion Garry Jennings who returns to the British Rally Championship after an 18-year lay-off.

Oulton Park will be his debut in an R5-specification car, so his acclimatisation period could prove key. In the World Rally Car corner are BTRDA stalwart Stephen Petch and BRC returnee Thomas Preston while Alan Carmichael brings a Hyundai i20 R5 to the party.

Reigning British Rally Championship National title-holder John Morrison has traded his Mitsubishi for a Ford Fiesta R5 while fellow Scotsman Donnie Macdonald will represent the Lancer Evo brigade in his E9 version.

LEADING ENTRIES

BRC national

SEED	DRIVER	CO-DRIVER	CAR
10	Garry Jennings	Rory Kennedy	Ford Fiesta R5
18	Alan Carmichael	Claire Williams	Hyundai i20 R5
23	Stephen Petch	Michael Wilkinson	Ford Fiesta WRC
35	Thomas Preston	Carl Williamson	Ford Fiesta WRC
36	Alistair Inglis	Colin Inglis	Ford Fiesta R5

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HISTORICS

DOWN THE PUB

JONATHAN LEWIS

Historic Sporting Trials novice
Age: 60 **Lives:** Attleborough

Sam and Jonathan Lewis

He wanted to try trials
"I always wanted to do it and I always wanted to do something where my wife Sam and I could compete together. We bought the car ages ago but Covid came along and we've entered more trials than we've done. Long Compton last week was our first one. We didn't know what we were doing, where we were going or how to do it."

He has competed off-road before
"I was an autograsser in my early days, so I'm used to mud. I learnt to drive in a field as a kid. I went to Ian Wright's place last October and we had a day in his playground. It was an eye opener but we both came away really looking forward to the trial a few weeks later but it was cancelled."

He has a Cannon
"The Cannon was in pretty good condition when I got it. We've just tinkered with it and Micky Galter has fiddled with it. It was a complete and running car and the reason I went for it was that I wanted an A series engine, because I don't understand Ford side-valve engines. We had some Florida green paint left and I decided that would make it look pretty."

There are no trials in Norfolk
"It's like having a mountain bike or a sledge in Norfolk, it's a waste of time, I don't mind travelling; I'm used to it. Even though I'd been to Ian Wright and had some training, I'd forgotten everything he said. There is a lot to it."

He had to adapt his driving
"It was only when I heard someone say 'he's blipping' that I remembered Ian saying that I was a blipper. That's probably from racing in Minis. So I stopped blipping the throttle and stopped revving and drove completely differently to how I'm used to driving and I started to get further up the hills."

They enjoyed it
"I even cleaned a couple of hills so I was pleased with that. We'll 100% do it again. It was good fun and Sam was asking when the next one is. I enjoyed it a lot. It's a great sport and it's nice to be doing something where you're not thinking 'he's got something better than I have'. All he's got is more skill."

Photos: Paul Lawrence, mcklein-imagedatabase.com

Vatenen scored a podium on Safari '98

VATANEN LINED UP FOR LONG-DISTANCE RALLYING OUTINGS IN THE FUTURE

World champion has opportunities after taking on new presidential role

By Paul Lawrence

Rallying legend Ari Vatanen could take part in some long-distance rallies after taking on the role as club president for the Rally the Globe organisation.

The 1981 World Rally champion will renew an old partnership with Rally the Globe founding force Fred Gallagher and says he is eager to experience the spirit and comradeship of global rallying adventures.

Now 69, Vatanen will be Rally the Globe's first club president as the organisation, and the whole of rallying, starts to emerge from the impact of the pandemic. RTG hopes to resume its international programme of events later this year.

Vatanen said: "I'm honoured and touched. These historic rally events have real appeal; they are full of spirit, comradeship and enjoyment and that's my kind of lifestyle. I love going back in time and looking at all these cars from the past and I'm really looking forward to being part of this very special atmosphere when I attend future events."

The Finn, who remains incredibly popular across the sport, will reunite with his former co-driver Gallagher. Together they won the FIA World Cup for Cross-Country Rallies with Citroen Sport in 1997 and also scored a famous podium finish on the 1998 Safari Rally in a factory Ford Escort WRC.

"I know now, as then, I will be in very good hands," said Vatanen. "Fred had a very calming and reassuring effect on my driving and it's the trust and friendship that we have built up over the years which has energised me to accept this wonderful position."

Gallagher (l) and Vatanen

There will be a drive to tempt Pinto-engined machines

Standalone Pinto S2000 events planned

The Sports 2000 Racing Car Club is making a big push to get the earlier Pinto-engined cars back onto the grid and will run at least four standalone Pinto races next season.

In more recent times, the cars from the first generation of Sports 2000 have tended to play a support role to the newer and faster Duratec-engined cars.

Last time out at Brands Hatch, the seven Pinto cars started from a separate grid after the 22 Duratec cars, However, split races have been pledged for next year to encourage more Pinto cars back onto the track.

"We want to bring the Pinto cars back to popularity again," said Sports 2000 racer and preparer Chris Snowdon.

McLaren for rally return in former works Opel Kadett

Former Subaru Impreza driver Stuart McLaren will contest the National section of this year's British Rally Championship in an ex-Opel Sweden Kadett GTE.

After an accident on the 1998 Scottish Rally McLaren focused on his career with the Royal Air Force and even represented Great Britain in triathlons at world level.

He then rallied a Porsche 911 before buying the Kadett from Chris Birkbeck. "I guess the British Rally Championship isn't the obvious place for the car but the BRC has always been part of my rallying career so it felt right to return," said McLaren, who will start his campaign at Oulton Park on Monday.

"I'm an asphalt man really as that's where I cut my teeth. I've got some experience of Oulton Park as I worked at the rally school there in the past so it will be a nice introduction back to the series."

WALLEN GOES FOR THE LONG CIRCUITS

Lotus 69 driver Tony Wallen will switch from hillclimbs back to racing for the opening Historic Formula 3 races of the season at Cadwell Park on June 5-6. Wallen made his Cadwell Park debut last July and hopes to do as many HF3 races as he can this season in his self-prepared car, including a first visit to the Brands Hatch GP circuit in July.

Storied Lola to return to the tracks after 50 years

A Lola T210 sports-racing car, not raced for 46 years, is being offered for sale in Sweden for £100,000 by Mats Andersson.

Though to be chassis SL210/16, it was sold new to Mike Hailwood in August 1970 and raced by Hailwood, and later David Hobbs and Dave Charlton in the Springbok Series in South Africa over four seasons.

The car was then sold to Angola and last raced in Luanda in June 1975. It has reputedly been stored and untouched in Sweden since 1980 and is being offered for sale in a 'barn find' condition.

Lola T210s are popular across historic racing and are eligible for a number of historic categories.

IN BRIEF

Beast is back
The 'Beast of Turin' and ERA R4D will be among the star cars at the Classic Nostalgia event at Shelsley Walsh on July 17-18. The 28-litre Fiat land speed record car of Duncan Pittaway will be a big draw while Nick Topliss will campaign R4D, one of the most successful cars in the Shelsley Walsh story. It set fastest time of the day at Shelsley 16 times in 20 years either side of the Second World War.

Trials visit
Motorsport UK chairman David Richards and Le Mans winner and F1 racer Jackie Oliver were interested visitors at the recent Long Compton Historic Sporting Trial. HSTA prime mover Martyn Halliday took time out from marshalling duties to give them a quick overview of the sport of mud-plugging.

Hall for Formula 2
Charles Hall, a Formula Vauxhall Lotus frontrunner in the late 1980s, will shortly make his Historic Formula 2 debut. His father Bill, a former Historic F1 racer, has an F2 Chevron B29 on target for the Silverstone Classic races. More recently, Hall has won the 750MC Bikesports title and this season he has tackled several hillclimbs in an Empire single-seater, the car usually run by Zach Zammit from Malta.

Lotus celebrates
Lotus will be the celebrated central feature marque at this year's Goodwood Festival of Speed and so a raft of famous Lotus racing cars are likely to be in action on the hill. The Lotus 25 still holds the period lap record for the Goodwood circuit.

Popular trials
A record entry of more than 60 cars contested the Long Compton Historic Sporting Trial as the shortened 2020-21 winter season came to a belated finish. Ian Wright won by three marks. An emphatic post-historic victory went to the Facksimile of Dave Oliver.

Entries open
Entries have now opened for the John Aley Summer Trial, the classic trial to mark 120 years of the Motor Cycling Club. Up to 420 cars and motorbikes will take part, making it the biggest non-circuit motorsport event of the year in the UK. It will start from Chard in Somerset at midnight on June 26 and finish 12 hours later at Blue Hills, Cornwall.

Trial runners are back

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FEATURE

YVAN MULLER

I THOUGHT RACING IN THE UK WAS THE PINNACLE

The British Touring Car Championship helped cement his career, and then the rapid Frenchman went on to conquer the world stage. He speaks to Matt James

Any challenge accepted: Yvan Muller even tried WRC

There was a 10-year spell between 2007 and 2016 where Yvan Muller didn't finish outside the top three in the chase for the World Touring Car Championship. In that period, he won four titles and claimed 47 race victories.

The man from Alsace is the king of tin-top racing, but it was something the British fans already knew. An eight-year stint in the British Touring Car Championship, seven of them with Vauxhall, and the title in 2003, meant he'd already laid down his credentials in a saloon car.

Muller turned 51 last year, but he had no time to celebrate as he was in the middle of a campaign in the World TCR series, which ultimately brought him to second in the points, one place behind his protege and nephew Yann Ehrlacher.

There have been thoughts of retirement – indeed, he has previously announced that he was stepping down from driving before being tempted back. Motorsport is a passion Muller simply can't leave alone and he is a driver who is always looking for a challenge.

Take, for example, his exploits on the Dakar Rally or even in the World Rally Championship. There is nothing he won't turn his hand to.

We set him a new challenge this week: to tackle the Motorsport News readers' questions. As you can see from his answers, his is a career that would be the envy of most other drivers.

Question: Where did your passion from motorsport come from: your sister Cathy raced too, so was it in the family?
John Charles
Via email

Yvan Muller: "It came from my father, because he was a hillclimb racer in the 1970s. He was purely an amateur. My older sister, Cathy, she was always with my father. One day when we were on holiday, father asked if she would like to have a go at some rental karting that was there, and she did. I couldn't take part because I was seven years younger than her, so I was too small. Then, on the way back from holiday, my father stopped off somewhere and we bought a kart for Cathy, but it was just for fun, really. Then one of the guys at the track saw her and told us we should get her a licence and take part in some proper organised races. She did that and she had good results. Although I was younger, I was just waiting until the time I was old enough and when I was, I just followed in her wheeltracks and it was normal for me.

"We used to go karting together to start with, but she was in the top [more senior] categories and I was just starting out, and then she moved on to car racing quite quickly. So we never raced together properly."

MN: Did you ever have the discussion about who is the better driver, you or her?

Photos: Motorsport Images, mcklein-imagedatabase.com, Jakob Ebrey

Muller thought his career was over after F3000 in 1993

Muller followed in the wheeltracks of his sister Cathy, above in 1985

Best of rivals: Plato (left) and Muller in 2001

YM: "No, there was no point!"

Question: You climbed a long way up the single-seater ladder, all the way to Formula 3000. I remember watching you race in British Formula 2 in 1992 too. How close did you get to Formula 1?
James Hilton
Via email
YM: "When you start out, that was the only thing that is in your mind. You come from karting and the only thing that matters to you is Formula 1. So I climbed through Formula Renault and through Formula 3. After British F2, which James mentioned, I went into FIA Formula 3000 in 1993 but all the doors were closed to me then. I didn't have the budget for F1 but also there were a lot of young drivers from my generation who were all chasing the same dream, which made it very hard to stand out. There were many drivers who were capable enough for F1. I didn't even really speak to any F1 teams.
I had done my year in F3000 and it was alright, but not really good enough [Muller raced with Omegaland, but the car was unreliable and he only managed to score two points in the final round of the year, which left him 17th in the standings]. I had no chance of F1 and I hadn't shown what I could really do.

"After that Formula 3000 season, I genuinely said to myself 'OK, motor racing is over for me'. I thought I would go and work in the family transport business. But, out of the blue, I got a call from [leading French team] ORECA. They told me that they were going to test 15 drivers and there was a place up for grabs to do the French Touring Car Championship with BMW. There were drivers like Nicolas Minassian who was going there too and lots of other drivers who were at F3 or F3000 level from my generation.

"ORECA told me I was on the list and told me which day to go to Paul Ricard and get in the car. After those tests, ORECA decided to take me. It was at that point that I realised there was a life outside of Formula 1."
MN: What did you think of a tin-top when you first drove one? Did you think they were slow?
YM: "I enjoyed it, of course, because after 1993 I thought my career was finished, over. Then I drove the BMW and I suddenly thought 'OK, maybe I have a chance for another career now'. I jumped in, there was a roof, I thought 'OK, that's cool'. The BMW was a nice car and we were on Ricard, which was a track I knew well, and this was my chance to remain as a professional racing driver. I did my best on that day and finally they took me for the race seat. When a team like ORECA calls you and asks you to test, they are not going to take some stupid drivers, they are looking for the best so the competition for the seat was very high."

Question: The British fans remember you coming to the UK with Audi. How come you moved from BMW to Audi for 1996? And what brought you the UK?
Russell Scobbie
Via email
YM: "Well, first of all, after my first season of touring cars with ORECA, they asked me to do ice racing with BMW. Initially, I refused because I thought it was all for rally drivers and I had no experience of that kind of thing. But team boss Hugues de Chaunac believed in me and wanted me to go and do it – he almost forced me.
I worked hard and I did it.

"BMW had pulled out of tin-top racing in France at the end of 1995 but ORECA wanted me to stay with them, because it had a Dodge Viper programme it was running in GT racing. But, at the same time, Audi made me a proposal to go and contest the Italian Touring Car Championship.

"They wanted me to go there and help Dindo Capello win the title. I said OK. It was tough to say no to ORECA, but it was a good choice to go with Audi. The year before in the Italian championship, Capello had helped Emanuele Pirro to win the title, so my job for 1996 was to help Capello get a shot at the crown and that is exactly what happened and I finished fourth in the points."

"I began to realise there was life outside F1"
Yvan Muller

MN sets the scene: After racing in Italy, Muller's journey with Audi took him to his employer's homeland with a crack at the STW in 1997 to help develop the new front-wheel-drive Audi A4 and then he was seconded to the British Touring Car Championship. He lined up in 1998 alongside John Bintcliffe.
Question: What did Yvan think of the British fans when he came for his first BTCC season? And was he impressed with how big the BTCC was?
Jon Wood
Via email
YM: "Everyone knows that England is a big motorsport country – it is probably the biggest, certainly in Europe. I had a lot of pleasure racing in the UK because people love it. People come from all over to watch the races and they are passionate.

"I remember back when I did British Formula 2, for example. I would do my race and on the same race-day programme was touring cars, single-seaters, truck racing, GTs and also karting: just amazing. Even at lunchtime, there was a cycling race…

"But the BTCC scene in the UK was absolutely huge when I joined in 1998. OK, so it was a British championship but you might as well have called it a World championship. There were big manufacturers, professional teams and drivers, it had everything."

MN sets the scene: After a year with Audi, Muller switched to Vauxhall and started a lengthy spell with the Triple Right Race Engineering team. It ultimately brought him the title in 2003, but there was some tough times in the build-up to that, including an incredibly fractious season alongside Jason Plato in 2001. Plato won the title in

continued on page 16

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FEATURE

Muller shared this Ferrari 333SP at Le Mans and loved the machine

Ice racing: when he was allowed to take part...

The Frenchman at work in 2013

Muller regards James Thompson (right) as the perfect team-mate

the final rounds, but it is a battle that lives long in the memory.

Question: Was Yvan's relationship with Jason Plato all the motorsport press made it out to be?
Richard Smith
Via Twitter

Question: Yvan, are you still friends with Jason Plato?
James LC
Via Twitter

MN: And who was the toughest driver you went up against at the height of the BTCC?

YM: "There was plenty who were tough to race against, but I seemed to have quite a lot of fights with Jason Plato. We were not friends, but that was almost normal. We were in the same team at one stage and we were fighting so hard for the same championship. He was not going to back down and I was not going to back down. It's like if you put two bulls in the same field, no?

"It was a big fight. That was back in the days. But now, I might not call Jason on the phone and ask him how he is, but if I saw him, I would be pleased to have a drink with him and talk about the old days. If we see each other, we are friends, and I believe it would be the same for him.

"OK, we were fighting on the track but we both had our own momentum. That was at that time, but there is no reason to hate each other for the rest of our lives."

Question: If you could have chosen a team-mate in the British Touring Car Championship, who would it be?
Jonathan Astbury
Via email

YM: "Well, I was pleased to work alongside James Thompson. We were team-mates for a long time and Jimmy is a gentleman, a really top guy. He was a good driver, really fast, and just nice to work alongside and to spend time with."

Question: What is the best memory from racing in the UK?
Jack Crowther
Via email

MN: We suppose it must be winning the title in 2003?

YM: "Winning the title was good, but I won only one. I should have won much more but I finished second so many times for so many reasons. I am not sure the title was my best memory because, to be honest, because I was testing in France the next day and I had to fly from Oulton to get there, I stayed in an Ibis hotel on my own that night. There was no time to celebrate. I won, but I was straight away on my own…

"I have plenty of great memories from the UK though and it is tough to pick out just one. I think it was more about the general atmosphere which I liked when I was in the UK. Maybe the second season when I went to Triple Eight Race Engineering was a really happy time for me – but only after one year.

"When we first started out together, the relationship with Triple Eight and its bosses, Ian Harrison, Roland Dane and Derek Warwick, was a bit complicated. I think I was probably a bit too French for them and they were probably a bit too English for me. I think they almost wanted to fire me after that first season in 1999 but I had a contract. But we worked things out and in the end I stayed seven seasons with them and we are good friends now. So I think it would be year two in the UK that was a good memory. The team understood me a bit more and I understood the English culture a bit more too and then we clicked together very well. I learned a lot in the UK. I realised about the culture and that was something I had to embrace."

Question: Which is Yvan's favourite spec of touring car? Super Touring, S2000, TCN1 or the current World TCR versions?
Barry May
Via email

YM: "I can't choose. For me it is always the next car that I win with. All the cars I drove gave me pleasure, of course. I would say the Citroen [C-Elysee in 2014 to 2016, the TCN1-spec car] was the most competitive car I had and the fastest, but at the same time it was more expensive and it was more complicated technically.

"I think what we have now with the WTCR cars is a very good compromise. It is the kind of car I was pushing for even 10 years ago and it has happened. We have nice cars, it is not as technically developed as Super Touring but at least with the new rules and the sustainability of the category now means that the drivers like me still have a job!"

Question: You have driven at all the great tracks, Yvan. Which is your favourite track?
Malcolm Munt
Via email

YM: "The one where I am winning! I have been lucky, and my favourite places are things like Macau, the Nurburgring Nordschleife or Bathurst, places like that. And we have done a lot of street circuits on the World Touring Car Championship calendar, but I am liking these circuits less and less because the risk factor is very, very high at a track like those. After you've turned 45 years old, it becomes harder to commit to a track like those…"

MN sets the scene: Ever the motorsport swashbuckler, Muller's sights spread beyond circuit racing. He tackled the Dakar Rally, and also took part in three rounds of the World Rally Championship, all in France (2010, 2011 and 2012, when he took his best finish of 12th). Despite his lack of experience, he was able to set some head-turning stage times in a rally car.

Question: Why didn't Yvan do more rallies? Would he like to have done a full season?
Damien Doherty
Via email

YM: "Maybe I should have had a rally career. My results and performance was not that bad considering I had no background in that sport and my pacenotes where not good at all because I had no knowledge of how to do this.

"I found that I was getting better as the rallies went on, and by the third day, I was able to set some competitive stage times. But, you know, you can't be everything and I didn't have the time to commit to it properly. I was always trying lots of things though: World rally, ice racing, touring cars, all sorts."

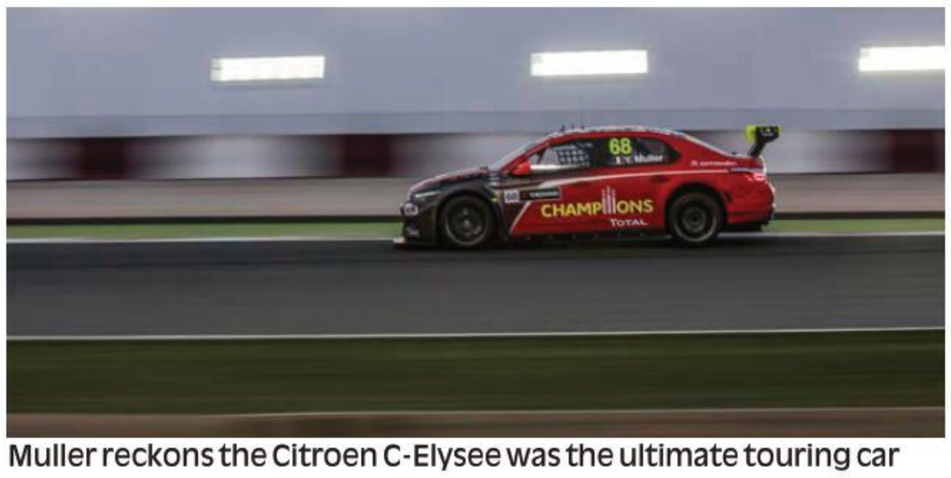
MN sets the scene: After his initial forays into ice racing with ORECA and BMW in 1995, Muller went on to become a 10-time champion in the discipline, including seven Andros Trophy wins in a row from 1995-1996 until 2001-2002. But it came to an abrupt halt…

Question: Is it true that they made a rule to stop you winning in ice racing in 2007?
Jake Sanderson
Via email

YM: "Yes! It is not that they made a rule, it was worse than that…I did 11 times the championship, and I finished fourth in the

"If I saw Plato now, we would share a drink"

Yvan Muller



Muller reckons the Citroen C-Elysee was the ultimate touring car

Yvan Muller has been a mainstay of the Lynk and Co WTCR attack

"I gave my Audi contract back to the team"

Yvan Muller

Muller's first tin-top foray in the UK came at the wheel of an Audi A4

Title at last: Muller wins the crown for Vauxhall in 2003

Nephew Yann Ehlacher (left) toppled uncle Yvan in WTCR last year

Yvan Muller took part in the WRC in France on three occasions

first season and then every time I did it after that, I won. Then they made a rule saying anyone who has won the title twice or more would have to carry an extra 80kg in the car. That would only affect me and Dany Snobeck, but Snobeck had retired by that stage…

"I still won the championship. Then the organisers sent me a letter saying that ice racing and the Andros Trophy was going to be by invitation only and I was not on the list of invites to go and take part again. They effectively told me to f*ck off.

"I was very upset, because that was my job. A lot of water has passed under the bridge since then and we are friends again. I am running two fully electric ice racing cars now, and they are owned by the same people who tried to get me out of the championship all that time ago."

MN sets the scene: While coming up through the ranks, Muller tackled the Le Mans 24 Hours in 1993 in an LMP-spec Debora, and then returned in 1996 to share a Ferrari 333SP with Fermin Velez and Andy Evans. Unfortunately, it only lasted 31 laps…

Question: What was the Ferrari 333SP like to drive at Le Mans?
Leo Barclay
Via email

YM: "I did enjoy that car, it was fantastic and it is a shame we didn't go too far in the race. That 333SP was one of the best prototype cars. Just to be in that car at Le Mans was special, because it is a Ferrari. You are there at this famous race and you have the Prancing Horse on the nosecone of the red car.

"Everything was beautiful for me. It was a big pleasure and the sound is just amazing too."

Question: Why did the deal to do Le Mans with Audi not happen? You were on its driver roster for the R8C 1999…
Chris Norman
Via email

YM: "That was my decision. I had a contract with Audi Sport to do Le Mans in one of the two first Audi they ran there. I did one year of testing with the team. I had gone to Vauxhall in 1999 in the British Touring Car Championship and I was simply doing too many things.

"I was doing the ice racing on the weekend, then taking a flight to South Africa on the Monday to test the BTCC car with Triple Eight for three days – it was the only place we could do to guarantee good weather – then get a flight back to do more ice racing. When I wasn't doing BTCC testing I would go with Audi to do a 24-hour test at somewhere like Paul Ricard. I was doing so much I nearly forgot my name.

"At the same time, Dindo Capello had a big crash in the Audi at Magny-Cours in testing, and I will be honest, I lost some confidence after that. I realised something had to change.

"[Then Audi Sport boss] Dr Wolfgang Ullrich told me that I was the only driver ever to hand back my contract to Audi Sport. I gave him back the contract and the money. I said sorry, I couldn't carry on and I squared everything with them."

MN: Do you regret that decision?

YM: "In some ways, yes of course. Just look at the success that the team went on to have at Le Mans, and I was around right at the very beginning of that programme. But then look: Michele Alboreto took my place in the team and he was killed testing the car in 2001…"

Question: What is the biggest challenge on the Dakar Rally?
Rachel Joyce
Via email

MN: You took part in 2007 and 2009. Why have you not been back?

YM: "I think the hardest thing is to conserve your energy. It is hard to keep it. When you are racing, you stay in a nice hotel, you have a nice dinner and you can have a proper sleep. On the Dakar, there is none of that.

"You wake up at 0500hrs, you drive to get to the start of the stage, you are in the stages for maybe six hours and then you have another three hours of a road section. They you arrive back at the bivouac. You cannot take a nice shower. You are sleeping in a f*cking tent. There is a generator going all night and you can't rest properly. After five days, you are ready to call your mother and ask her to come and bring you home!"

MN: Would you do it again if you have the chance?

YM. "Hmm…no! I say that, but Yann [Ehrlacher], my nephew [and reigning WTCR champion], is always saying 'why don't we go and do it?' I told him no, although I know it is a very different event now. It is still hard, I am sure, but I don't think it is as hard as it was."

MN sets the scene: Yvan Muller's nephew Yann Ehrlacher, son of his racing sister Cathy, won the World TCR title last season. He had been a protege of Yvan, and Yvan finished second in the points to him, both driving for the Cyan Performance Lynk and Co concern.

Question: How did it feel when the family finished 1-2 in the WTCR?
Thomas Harrison-Lord
Via Twitter

YM: "For me, that was a big victory. I was as pleased, or maybe more pleased, for Yann to win the title. OK, I was second and that was like the cherry on the cake for me. When he was 16 and he was doing nothing at school, I asked him what his motivation was in life. He said he wanted to be a racing driver, so I asked him why he hadn't spoken to his mother about it. He told me he had tried but she didn't want to listen. So I told him that if he managed to improve his results in studying, I would buy him a karting season. And that worked. Then I said if he could get his results even better after that, I would pay for him to go car racing when he was old enough. And that worked too.

"Step by step we worked and seven years later, he is now a World champion. I am pleased that he won, and I am proud that we work so well together and I would say he is better than me. My book was open to him, he could learn anything he wanted from me. I am older with experience, but he has the heart of a 25-year-old racing driver which I don't have any more."

Question: Will Yvan write a book?
Danny Roberts
Via email

YM: "Maybe, but just for my children. I am not sure how many other people would be interested. I do have some good stories to tell, but I would not only do it on the positive things. Somebody started to do it a couple of years ago. One guy contacted me and told me he wanted to write about me. I read it after he'd got to about 50 pages, but I didn't like the way he was writing, so I told him to stop.

"I would consider it, but I am just too busy right now. Not yet." ■

Advertising enquiries: 01732 446757

WRC REPORT: RALLY PORTUGAL

No one could touch the high-flying Welshman

EVANS GETS REVENGE FOR CROATIA DEFEAT WITH BARNSTORMING WIN IN PORTUGAL

A strong push through Sunday morning helped the Toyota man reach the top. By Graham Lister

By his own admission, Elfyn Evans wasn't the fastest driver on Rally of Portugal. Crucially, however, he was faster than Dani Sordo when it mattered most.

Evans, who told Motorsport News before the start of the "hurt" he suffered after missing out on winning last month's Croatia Rally by 0.6s, had been winless in the WRC in 2021.

Heading to Porto's seaside superspecial on Saturday evening with a 16.4s margin over Sordo, there was a good chance that Evans would be winless no more and the pain of defeat would subside.

His Toyota team-mate Sebastien Ogier, the reigning World champion and the man who edged out Evans in Croatia, was more than one minute in arrears after 14 stages, while Hyundai pair Thierry Neuville and Ott Tanak had both come unstuck on the tricky Portuguese roads, which had been starved of WRC action for 12 months due to Covid-19 leading to last year's event being canned.

But those 16.4s Evans had in hand over Sordo had been narrowed to 10.7s by the time the two-mile street course was done.

Evans had been on tyre preservation mode, while Sordo switched to 'karting mode', capitalising on lessons learned driving karts to seek out the optimal line. Despite concerns caused by a starter motor glitch prior to the superspecial getting underway, Sordo was back in the fight with five, albeit relatively short, Sunday stages remaining.

"I felt we had good grip [on the superspecial] so tried to keep clean and not lose too much time," said Sordo at the completion of Saturday's leg. "We could catch some time back to Evans and we're now just 10 seconds behind. He was a little bit faster today, but tomorrow is another day. I would like to win, it will be maximum attack."

RESULTS

World Rally Championship round 4/12

Event: Rally of Portugal **Where:** Matosinhos, nr Porto **When:** May 21-23

POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Elfyn Evans/Scott Martin	Toyota Yaris WRC	3h38m26.2s
2	Dani Sordo/Borja Rozada	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+28.3
3	Sebastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia	Toyota Yaris WRC	+1m23.6s
4	Takamoto Katsuta/Daniel Barritt	Toyota Yaris WRC	+2m28.4s
5	Gus Greensmith/Chris Patterson	Ford Fiesta WRC	+4m52.7s
6	Adrien Fourmaux/Renaud Jamoul	Ford Fiesta WRC	+5m03.4s
7	Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm	Volkswagen Polo GTI R5	+9m37.2s
8	Teemu Suninen/Mikko Markkula	Ford Fiesta Rally2	+11m20.0s
9	Mads Ostberg/Torstein Eriksen	Citroen C3 Rally2	+12m01.5s
10	Nikolay Gryazin/Konstantin Aleksandrov	Volkswagen Polo GTI R5	+12m35.8s

WRC2: Lappi/Ferm; **WRC3:** Kajetan Kajetanowicz/Maciej Szczepaniak (Skoda Fabia Rally2 Evo); **JWRC:** Martins Sesks/Renars Francis (Ford Fiesta Rally4) **Championship:** 1 Ogier 79; 2 Evans 77; 3 Neuville 57; 4 Tanak 45; 5 Rovanpera 41; 6 Katsuta 36; etc **Next rally:** Rally Italy, June 3-6

Sordo was 'ordered' to put his foot down and stop the Toyota rout

Toyota's Ogier banked a podium but had no answer to the pacesetters

There was also an "order" from above for Sordo to nose ahead of Evans in no uncertain terms. Riled by watching first Neuville and then Tanak retire, Hyundai team chief Andrea Adamo was desperate for his returning driver to snatch victory from the jaws of a second straight Toyota defeat.

"Dani has the clear order to fight for the win," Adamo insisted. "He has to try all he can to win."

What happened next was the ultimate reversal of fortune. From seemingly being under pressure one minute due to his trimmed advantage, Evans was back in the ascendancy with what he described as "quite a big push" through Sunday's opener, which put him 20.3s clear. Evans then beat Sordo on the next three stages to the extent he would start the powerstage 26.2s in front. Sordo, like Adamo, had all but lost.

Unlike in Croatia, where his 3.9s advantage prior to the closing run was ultimately not enough, in Portugal Evans' healthy lead was never under threat on the final stage with the Welshman even managing to extend his gap to Sordo to 28.3s, courtesy of the fifth fastest time.

That effort provided Evans and co-driver Scott Martin with a World championship bonus point and means Ogier and Julien Ingrassia – who lost chunks of time opening the road on leg one and also suffered a rare half-spin – will be a mere two points in front of Evans when Sardinia hosts round five of the season next week.

"A few have slipped away recently and I wanted to make sure we delivered this time," Evans said afterwards with a nod to his late defeats in Monza last season and in Croatia this year. "It wasn't easy and going back to a full-length rally and the recce was really intense.

"Obviously we didn't have so much spare time to play with. It was going to be a big fight [on the final day] as far as I was concerned so it was important to go well from the off. On the back of [Croatia] I am happy to move forward."

Although he had no answer to Evans, Sordo was magnanimous in defeat. "I am a bit disappointed that I could not catch Elfyn for the win, but he was faster today. If you're faster, then you win."

Sordo had been winning, by 8.2s in fact, only for a stall on SS7 to cost him 10s and drop him behind Tanak and Evans into third. Tyre issues then hampered his

Photos: Hyundai Motorsport, Toyota Gazoo Racing, mcklein-imagedatabase.com

M-Sport had a strong weekend and Briton Gus Greensmith equalled career-best t fifth position overall

Repairs by the driver were not enough to keep Hyundai man Thierry Neuville in the hunt in Portugal

LAPPI'S WRC2 TRIUMPH LEAVES HIM WITH ANGUISH

Cracks are emerging in WRC2, supposedly the place to be for career-minded drivers doing good things in Rally2 cars.

The best driver (Esapekka Lappi) is out of cash, the second-best driver (Andreas Mikkelsen) is out of action with Covid-19, while Ole Christian Veiby, who is not necessarily the next in line but is no slouch, is out for the season after he was banned for breaching Covid-19 protocol in the build-up to last week's rally.

Lappi's financial plight is perhaps a good thing as far as his rivals are concerned, however. His Portugal victory was his second from as many starts and he was often out of reach after 2.2s had covered the top three following leg one.

"In strange times it is not so easy to get sponsors," said Lappi, once a WRC event-winning factory driver. "I will try but there is no guarantee we will continue. But if you give me one million euros, then I can do, no problem."

Teemu Suninen was Lappi's biggest threat on the gravel stages in an M-Sport Fiesta. But he was more than 1m40s behind at the finish after he was delayed in Mads Ostberg's dust when the Norwegian punctured on Friday morning before he suffered a puncture of his own on Saturday afternoon.

Ostberg battled back to third position after his early delays, inheriting the final podium spot from Nikolay Gryazin when the Russian's Volkswagen Polo faltered on day two, as an overshoot and stall cost Oliver Solberg a shot at third.

Lappi took the win in WRC2, but it could be his last for a while

ARMSTRONG'S PACE GOES UNREWARDED DESPITE PACE

From the highs of a JWRC comeback victory in Croatia to the lows of a day-two retirement in Portugal, Jon Armstrong's return to world rallying has certainly been a case of contrasting fortunes.

After landing four consecutive stage wins, Armstrong started SS6 leading by 36.4s. But as if a puncture was bad enough, the Northern Irishman's agony was compounded by his Ford Fiesta Rally4 falling off its jack while he and co-driver Phil Hall were mid-wheel change. More than 4m30s were lost on SS6 and Armstrong completed leg one in fourth.

Heading to Saturday's penultimate stage, Armstrong was up to third but stopped with engine failure and would go no further. Nevertheless, the six stage-win points he scored could yet prove decisive in the final championship reckoning.

William Creighton's Friday included a top-two stage time, but driveshaft failure ended his hopes of an overall podium. He used the rest of the rally to gain crucial experience after he restarted on Saturday and eventually finished fifth. "It's been a really tricky rally with the driveshaft issue but we set some encouraging times," said Creighton, whose fellow Motorsport Ireland-supported driver, Josh McErlean, finished a strong fifth in WRC3.

Despite stage-winning pace, Jon Armstrong's engine broke

TOP THREE FINISH SURPRISES INGRAM AS MILEAGE GROWS

Year one of Chris Ingram's two-season WRC campaign was supposed to be about gaining experience ahead of a concerted push in 2022.

After claiming his breakthrough WRC3 podium in Portugal, the British driver is already focused on achieving top results. Despite the enormity of his latest achievement – he's competed twice in a Rally2 car since becoming European champion in 2019 – Ingram described a feeling of "mixed emotions" when Motorsport News spoke to him following his latest career high.

"We've done really well, but it's mixed emotions," he said. "We keep making these small mistakes with our tyre choice and, at this level, we can't afford to do that. I know we've got the pace to be fighting with Kajto [Kajetanowicz]. But everything needs to be perfect."

Ingram's reluctance to be fully satisfied with his podium- and stage-winning performance stems from the decision to run hard-compound Pirelli tyres on leg one.

"We thought the softs would get destroyed but the stages were quite damp," he said. "We did the same on day two because with that 38-kilometre stage we thought the tyres would definitely get destroyed. But they didn't and we got absolutely murdered. By the end of that loop, which is the biggest loop of rallying I've ever done, our tyres looked like brand new. It's frustrating because we were 4.6s off the lead after day one, but it's all because we didn't have the experience [for the right tyre calls]."

Ingram and co-driver Ross Whittock won two of Sunday's five stages at a time with Kajetanowicz and Yohan Rossel were fighting for the class win.

"I didn't think we'd be on the pace so soon," the 26-year-old said. "I thought we'd be able to snatch third by people dropping out. But we got third on pace and that's really good."

Ingram was left ruing a lack of knowledge of the Pirelli tyres

efforts to recover lost ground and he was 3.0s behind Evans and 9.0s down on Tanak at the Friday night halt, by which time Hyundai's challenge had been cut from three to two following Neuville's roll on SS7, while the Belgian was in a strong second place.

"The pacenote was too fast," Neuville explained. "When I saw the corner I tried to correct it but there was something like a tree stump that pulled us onto our side."

Neuville did eventually complete the stage but makeshift repairs on the road section failed and he would retire soon after.

His restart on Saturday lasted until SS11 when the order was given to return to service to carry out a full repair ahead of a powerstage push on Sunday.

Tanak's i20 Coupe WRC was also being primed for a similar final-stage charge before Saturday's leg was over. He'd damaged the right-rear suspension on SS14 while leading Evans by more than 20s. Despite gallantly trying to drag his broken car to the stage finish, Tanak called time three miles before the end of the stage.

"It was far from a great end after what had been a nice and enjoyable day to that point," said a dejected Tanak, who had been on course to become the first double winner of 2021 prior to his exit.

Tanak returned on Sunday minus any spare tyres and his usual full-face helmet in order to save as much weight as possible in his ultimately successful bid to win the powerstage and snatch five, potentially crucial, points.

Behind Ogier, Japanese driver Takamoto Katsuta – with Brit Dan Barritt co-driving – scored a career-best fourth. Gus Greensmith equalled his PB for M-Sport in fifth ahead of team-mate Adrien Fourmaux.

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BRITISH GT REPORT: BRANDS HATCH

IN BRIEF

Nearys aim high
Richard and Sam Neary in their Team Abba Mercedes continued strong 2021 form by becoming British GT3's inaugural Silver-Am class winner. Moreover, and despite an FP1 accident taking away running time, they finished just 16.3 seconds off WPI's winning Huracan. "We're not coming here to win Silver-Am, we're coming here to win a race," Richard said. "We could have been at the front [at Brands], my lap times were no different, we were just out of grid position."

Cottingham's mixed bag
Historic racer James Cottingham showed fine pace early on in his RAM Mercedes before a race-ending collision with Adam Balon's Lamborghini. "When the conditions were a little bit tricky at the start he's very good, this comes from his historics where he's used to the car moving around", explained RAM boss Dan Shufflebottom. "[I'm] sorry for Adam, James probably just misread the situation. He felt terrible about it for Adam and Barwell and for all the guys here."

Bentley boost
Kelvin Fletcher and Martin Plowman had an encouraging debut in their GT3 JRM Racing Bentley, a car that Fletcher admitted many had warned him not to take on. Their eventual seventh place might have been even better as the car ran fourth for much of the way, before Fletcher picked up a drivethrough penalty for overtaking before the timing line at a safety car restart.

Calm at Century
Going straight from being championship rivals to sharing a car might seem a likely source of friction, but not so for Century's GT4 winners at Brands Will Burns and Gus Burton, who fought over last year's Ginetta GT4 Supercup crown. "We always had a good relationship, there was never animosity last year," Burton said. "I knew we'd be a strong line-up and we get along well. Also we're at different ages and different points in our career so I don't think there's going to be any fighting between the two of us."

Speedworks positive
Speedworks' bad luck in British GT from last year continued in 2021's opener, as its GT4 Toyota Supra retired early after Chris Salkeld's BMW made contact trying to pass. And given how the race unfolded towards Pro-Am runners, team boss Christian Dick reckons victory was possible. "Scott's [McKenna] been blindingly fast in every session that we've put him in," Dick said. "We would have had something for possibly even overall win for GT4. Overall we've got to be really pleased, all the hard work over the winter's paid off."

Speedworks (15) out of luck

Burton and Burns celebrate

Lambo held off Aston at Brands

KEEN AND IGOE BOSS BRANDS IN WPI LAMBO

Hard work pays off for the WPI Lamborghini of Keen and Igoe at Brands Hatch while a late puncture decides the GT4 race in Century's favour

In motorsport as in anything else, you get out what you put in. And WPI Motorsport's decisive win in British GT's 2021 two-hour season opener at Brands Hatch came with a definite sense of effort being rewarded.

Much work has gone in to get this Lamborghini Huracan effort to its winning pitch, including in the off-season recruiting Phil Keen to drive alongside the vastly improved Michael Igoe. At Brands it all got its return.

"It couldn't have gone any better!," Igoe exclaimed. "We've built this whole team, myself and Alyn Roberts, and it's slowly starting to pay off. There's been a lot of work gone on behind the scenes to get where we are. It's a real good confidence boost for the team."

Returning champion pair Andrew Howard and Jonny Adam in a Beechdean Aston Martin Vantage, together full-time for the first time since 2015, immediately got back into old habits by taking Brands' pole. But come the race, run initially in greasy conditions after a pre-race shower, Igoe from second had immediate designs on Howard's lead, and after just five laps passed at Druids.

"It was a good start to the race and working out where the strengths of the Aston was against the strengths of the Lamborghini," Igoe continued. "When I made my mind up it was just about waiting to make that move, which we did. It was [then] just a case of keep everything clean."

The Howard/Adam Vantage didn't relent in its pursuit, but the Lamborghini had the legs of it.

"We were really strong for the first six, seven laps," Adam said of his stint, "and then all of a sudden the tyre pressure rose quite heavily. So I really struggled with a lot of loss of grip. But overall I would have taken a podium straight away this weekend. Andrew's pace this weekend has been outstanding. Hopefully we can keep mounting solid results every weekend."

Towards the end, Adam had another Huracan to think about, with Barwell's third-placed Dennis Lind, sharing with Leo Machitski, closing swiftly. Adam prevailed by a mere 0.3 seconds. "I'd seen them coming – you can't miss the livery!," Adam said of his dayglo opponent. "He was super-fast, especially out the back [the GP loop]. We just had enough. For sure the Lambo looks like it's a good race car; definitely we've got a good qualifying car. We'll do the math and see if we can improve it for Silverstone."

Things could have been even better for third-placed Lind/Machitski but for a pitstop delay. "We normally nail it but we are human. It was a few things multiplied up," Barwell boss Mark Lemmer said. The main problem was that the timer on Lind's dashboard had failed meaning the Dane sat patiently waiting for his green light signal when it was in fact time to go.

"We would have [otherwise] been in the mix for the win, 100%" Lemmer said. "Dennis is one of the best overtakers in Europe. It would have been interesting."

It was a frustrating day generally for defending champion Barwell as its Sandy Mitchell/Adam Balon Huracan had its hopes dashed when Balon was pitched into Paddock Hill Bend's gravel at one third's distance by an attacking James Cottingham in his RAM Racing Mercedes. "That was a potential second place, Sandy had excellent pace," Lemmer added. "We haven't had a bad round since 2019 and that for us was definitely a bad round."

Barwell's frustration even so will struggle to rival that of Assetto Motorsport, which in Brands' GT4 contest looked all set to win on debut with its Pro-Am pair Charlie Robertson and Mark Sansom in the new Ginetta G56.

Three safety car periods in the opening stint played into the hands of GT4's Pro-Am runners, as the Silver Cup pairings have to take an additional 26s over their pitstops and the cautions had kept Pro-Ams within range to leapfrog them.

And in the case of the Assetto Ginetta it looked to have left them set fair to win, with factory driver Robertson leading comfortably from the Will Burns/Gus Burton Century Motorsport BMW M4, which had led before the stops. But with just six minutes left Robertson got a left-rear puncture that dropped him to fourth.

"Just coming to terms with it really," said a sickened Robertson. "[The] car felt good, the strategy played off really well, just had to manage the gap. Just had a feeling out of Paddock Hill, felt a slight movement on the tyre.

"We're a bit gutted, but also happy: first weekend showing real potential. The team's done a great job; Mark's done a great job. From working with them all over the winter I knew that we

"We've built the team and it's starting to pay off"
Michael Igoe

The safety car changed GT4 race

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

BRITISH F3 REPORT

ZAK ATTACK EXPLOITS SIMMONS SLIP

Carlin's Zak O'Sullivan leads the BRDC British Formula 3 standings after showing both strong pace and a clean nose during a madcap Brands Hatch triple-header season-opener.

The 16-year-old British Formula 4 graduate took a win plus two solid scores from Kent's curtain-raiser to sit four points clear of an unlikely foe in Oliver Bearman of Fortec Motorsport.

German and Italian Formula 4 race-winner Bearman was a late Brands entrant, and is set to do five British F3 rounds this year alongside German and Italian F4 commitments. He had never driven on the Brands Grand Prix loop before first practice and had never driven on it in the dry before qualifying. Yet he immediately qualified second then took two competitive second-place finishes. Like O'Sullivan, he combined speed with the avoidance of trouble at Brands.

In race one Ayrton Simmons of Chris Dittmann Racing did what many anticipated. The championship returnee – and for many this year's title favourite – took a win from pole that was untroubled even with Bearman and O'Sullivan close throughout.

"I put in a quick lap at the start and from then on it was just trying to keep within a tenth or two," Simmons said. "It was very controlled, just minding my own business. There was no point of concern, it's very hard to overtake here."

Bearman meanwhile was thrilled at his fast adaptation. "Steep learning curve but I was learning every lap," he said. "Racing in Europe we go to a lot of different tracks and sometimes we don't always have a lot of time to get up to speed. It's a skill I have and a skill I want to bring forward."

Simmons was minded for a repeat performance in race two, again from pole, but with Bart Horsten of Hitech GP trying to pass on the outside at Druids first time through the pair tangled with Simmons' machine landing on top of Horsten's for a few fearful seconds. Both drivers were cautious about attributing blame but the stewards gave Simmons a five-place grid penalty that he'll serve at Silverstone next month as in the fully reversed-grid Brands finale he was starting last anyway.

O'Sullivan was the chief direct beneficiary in race two, as he won edging away from second-placed Bearman. "We showed the speed we potentially had [in race one] if I was in clean air," O'Sullivan said. "I settled down from turn one and saw Ayrton on top of Bart's car! From there we were able to control the pace."

In the reversed-grid race, now the finale and based on qualifying not race times, CDR's Max Marzorati took the lead from second on the grid but fell back before the first turn with an overheated clutch. And amid the mess Carlin's Christian Mansell, all the way from seventh, swept into first around the outside of Paddock.

O'Sullivan (51) leads the points while Bearman (inset) impressed

"That was something out of a fairy tale, I've got no words to describe that start!," said the charismatic Australian, who like O'Sullivan has graduated from British F4 with Carlin. "Either I was exceptionally good or everyone was just caught lacking!"

And Mansell remained in command for the rest of the way to win ahead of Elite Motorsport's Javier Sagrera. "The car was a dream to drive," Mansell added. "I'm buzzing, so happy. It was just maintain the gap, I didn't really have to push."

O'Sullivan finished seventh in the reversed-grid counter and therefore leads the standings as noted from Bearman. O'Sullivan's nearest full-time challenger is Hitech's Reece Ushijima 17 points off the top after a consistent weekend with three top-six finishes. Simmons is sixth, 34 off the summit.

Graham Keilloh

Lind put in thrilling late charge

had a good team package to challenge for some good positions."

Burns and Burton inherited the win, and Burns had sympathy for his opponent. "Commiserations to the Assetto Ginetta, no-one likes to lose it in the last few minutes," he said. "Century Motorsport, they're a fantastic team and hats off to them for giving us a great car into this weekend.

"He's amazing, Gus, I know how hard he races [from] last year," Burns added of his 2020 Ginetta GT4 Supercup title rival Burton. "We've got a mutual respect; we know we're both quick."

For Burns too it was a successful British GT comeback. "I just felt like I had some unfinished business in here," he said. "I was able to showcase my pace in 2018 but we just couldn't quite get any success in Pro-Am, so we've done a different tactic here and gone Silver-Silver and hopefully we can keep building on the momentum."

Century indeed completed a 1-2 at Brands with the Chris Salkeld/Andrew Gordon-Colebrooke Pro-Am pair following its sister car home.

There were hard luck tales elsewhere too in the GT4 fight. The Will Moore/Matt Cowley Academy Ford Mustang retired after contact with Balfe's GT3 McLaren, the Steller Audi fell from the frontrunning mix with a 10s stop-go penalty for an unsafe pitstop release, while the Speedworks Toyota Gazoo Racing Supra retired early with suspension damage sustained in a brush with Salkeld at Hawthorns.

SUPPORT RACES

Theo Edgerton of TCR and Jack Bartholomew of Redline Racing split Porsche Sprint Challenge GB honours as Am top dog Ian Humphris added two more wins. Edgerton ran away with the opener, but chucked away a fourth straight win in race two. First he made a dire start from pole allowing Team Parker Racing's Ethan Hawkey to lead before Bartholomew nipped ahead at Surtees at one-third distance. Edgerton soon moved past Bartholomew but ran wide at Clearways with a third of the race left to give him back the lead. With rear damage, Edgerton did his best to chase but ran out of time and lost his unbeaten record.

The new Ginetta GT Academy kicked off with SVG Motorsport's Toby Trice taking the opener, twice affected by a safety car, while he won race two with a last-corner lunge on Want2Race's Angus Whiteside. Trice made it three out of three as he relieved former Production BMW racer Ravi Ramyead of the lead of the final stanza two laps from home after Ramyead made an error.

In the Ginetta GT5 Challenge triple-header Josh Steed of Xentek Motorsport won the opener, wherein he benefited from a time penalty for on-the-road winner John Bennett of Elite Motorsport, who was pinged for overtaking during a yellow flag period. Bennett made amends in race two to take the win from Elite team-mate Will Apsin and Steed, but fell foul of rain in race three and plunged off the road at Hawthorns as Steed won again from Elite's Will Aspin. Marc Warren of Raceway Motorsport was the dominant driver in the G40 Cup, taking three wins out of three.

A monster grid of over 40 cars tackled the Classic Sports Car Club's Tin Tops Series race, which was headed initially by Andrew Windmill in a Honda Civic. Eric Boulton's fellow Civic wriggled by a lap later as the safety car was deployed, but Boulton edged away on the restart and maintained the advantage during the mandatory pitstops, a red flag ending the race and preserving his win over Robert Jarman and Jonathan Hunter.

David Addison

RACE WINNERS

BRDC British Formula 3 Championship
Race 1: Ayrton Simmons (Chris Dittmann Racing)
Race 2: Zak O'Sullivan (Carlin)
Race 3: Christian Mansell (Carlin)

Classic Sports Car Club Tin Tops
Eric Boulton (Honda Civic 2000)

Porsche Sprint Challenge GB
Race 1: Theo Edgerton (TCR)
Race 2: Jack Bartholomew (Redline Racing)

Ginetta GT Academy
Races 1, 2&3: Toby Trice (SVG Motorsport)

Ginetta GT5 Challenge
Races 1&3: Josh Steed (Xentek Motorsport)
Race 2: John Bennett (Elite Motorsport)

Bartholomew (89) and Edgerton (54) shared Porsche wins

RESULTS

British GT Championship 2021
Round 1: Brands Hatch, GT3

POS.	DRIVER 1/DRIVER 2	TEAM/CAR	CATEGORY	TIME
1	Michael Igoe/Phil Keen	WPI Motorsport/Lamborghini Huracan	Pro-Am	2h01m21.444s
2	Andrew Howard/Jonny Adam	Beechdean AMR/Aston Martin Vantage	Pro-Am	+9.614s
3	Leo Machitski/Dennis Lind	Barwell Motorsport/Lamborghini Huracan	Pro-Am	+9.949s
4	Ian Loggie/Yelmer Buurman	RAM Racing/Mercedes-AMG	Pro-Am	+14.818s
5	Richard Neary/Sam Neary	Team ABBA Racing/Mercedes-AMG	Silver-Am	+16.346s
6	Nick Jones/Scott Malvern	Team Parker Racing/Porsche 911	Pro-Am	+51.459s
7	Kelvin Fletcher/Martin Plowman	JRM Racing/Bentley Continental	Pro-Am	+1m09.000s
8	Stewart Proctor/Lewis Proctor	Balfe Motorsport/McLaren 720S	Silver-Am	+1m18.931s
9	Shamus Jennings/Greg Caton	G-Cat Racing/Porsche 911	Am-Am	-1 lap
10	Lucky Khera/Ross Wylie	Simon Green Motorsport/Lamborghini Huracan	Silver-Am	-1 lap*

*30s added to race time for causing a collision
11 Michael Brown/Matt Manderson (Ultimate Speed/Aston Martin Vantage) -2 laps; 12 Adam Balon/Sandy Mitchell (Barwell Motorsport/Lamborghini Huracan) -4 laps; R James Cottingham/Sam De Haan (RAM Racing/Mercedes-AMG GT3) 24 laps; R Morgan Tillbrook/Marcus Clutton (Enduro Motorsport/McLaren 720S) 0 laps. **Pole position:** Howard/Adam 2m49.958s (aggregate time). **Fastest lap:** Lind 1m24.964s (103.10mph). **Winner's average speed:** 92.63mph.

Round 1: Brands Hatch, GT4

POS.	DRIVER 1/DRIVER 2	TEAM/CAR	CATEGORY	TIME
1	Will Burns/Gus Burton	Century Motorsport/BMW M4	Silver Cup	2h01m56.100s
2	Chris Salkeld/Andrew Gordon-Colebrooke	Century Motorsport/BMW M4	Pro-Am	+12.084s
3	James Kell/Jordan Collard	Team Rocket RJN/McLaren 570S	Silver Cup	+36.687s
4	Mark Sansom/Charlie Robertson	Assetto Motorsport/Ginetta G56	Pro-Am	+52.252s
5	Richard Williams/Sennan Fielding	Steller Motorsport/Audi R8	Silver Cup	+59.946s
6	Nick Halstead/Jamie Stanley	Fox Motorsport/McLaren 570S	Pro-Am	-1 lap
7	Ashley Marshall/Jack Brown	Balfe Motorsport/McLaren 570S	Silver Cup	-1 lap
8	Katie Milner/Harry Hayek	Team Rocket RJN/McLaren 570S	Silver Cup	-1 lap
9	Dave Whitmore/Jake Giddings	Ciceley Motorsport/Mercedes-AMG	Pro-Am	-2 laps
Ret	Will Moore/Matt Cowley	Academy Motorsport/Ford Mustang	Silver Cup	28 laps

R John Ferguson/Scott McKenna (Toyota Gazoo Racing UK/GR Supra) 7 laps; R Alain Valente/Michael Benyahia (Team Rocket RJN/McLaren 570S) 0 laps. **Pole position:** Burns/Burton 3m03.874s (aggregate time). **Fastest lap:** Robertson 1m32.197s (95.01mph). **Winner's average speed:** 87.40mph.

DRIVER STANDINGS

Igoe and Keen lead the way

BRITISH GT: GT3

POS.	DRIVER	POINTS
1	Michael Igoe/Phil Keen	37.5
2	Andrew Howard/Jonny Adam	27
3	Leo Machitski/Dennis Lind	22.5
4	Ian Loggie/Yelmer Buurman	18
5	Richard Neary/Sam Neary	15
6	Nick Jones/Scott Malvern	12
7	Kelvin Fletcher/Martin Plowman	9
8	Stewart Proctor/Lewis Proctor	6
9	Shamus Jennings/Greg Caton	3
10	Lucky Khera/Ross Wylie	1.5

Late stop denied Assetto win

BRITISH GT: GT4

POS.	DRIVER	POINTS
1	Will Burns/Gus Burton	37.5
2	Chris Salkeld/Andrew Gordon-Colebrooke	27
3	James Kell/Jordan Collard	22.5
4	Mark Sansom/Charlie Robertson	18
5	Richard Williams/Sennan Fielding	15
6	Nick Halstead/Jamie Stanley	12
7	Jack Brown/Ashley Marshall	9
8	Harry Hayek/Katie Milner	6
9	Dave Whitmore/Jake Giddings	3

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GETTING OVER THE LINE

TECHNICAL COLUMN PROVIDED BY WITHAM MOTORSPORT – DISTRIBUTORS OF MOTUL AUTOMOTIVE LUBRICANTS

The new Great British Sportscar that is shining a light on an exclusive partnership between Motul and the performance road-car market

Motul is delighted to announce a new partnership with bespoke UK manufacturer the Great British Sports Cars that has produced the exciting new Motul-Edition GBS Zero sportscar, which will be officially revealed at the end of July at the Silverstone Classic meeting.

The new design will include a host of Motul-inspired features. From the machining of metal billets through all the necessary turning, drilling and assembly processes to the first fill of all lubricants as the final part of the car's journey to finished automobile, Motul products are being used throughout.

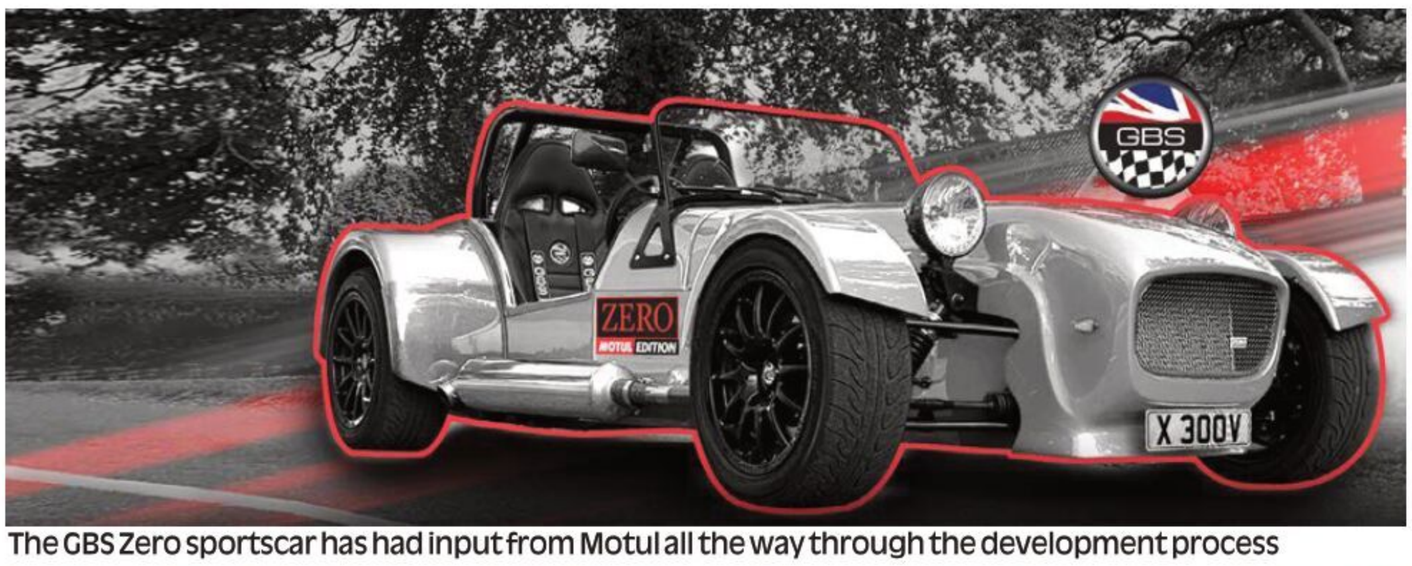
It is believed to be the first car in the world to be made and run on lubricants from the same manufacture. From cutting oils to hydraulic fluids used in the manufacturing process to make all the parts to the fluids used throughout the car, including engine oil, gearbox oil, brake fluid, engine coolant, greases and even Witham screenwash, this will be made to a performance standard with bespoke specifications.

There will be a long list of specialist parts, and Motul branding will be sculpted onto – or etched into – the brake calipers, headlight covers, interior upholstery and even the chassis itself.

The ultra-lightweight Zero sportscar will be powered by a 2.5-litre Ford Duratec engine, specially prepared by Neil Brown Engineering. Neil Brown Engineering is the company that provides the motive power for the British Formula 4 championship – a series where Motul is proud to be the lubricant partner, providing the spec engine oil for all competitors.

With a 240bhp power unit, a dry sump oil system, ATR throttle bodies and a kerb weight of only 500kg, the Motul-Edition GBS Zero will have a power-to-weight ratio of almost 500bhp per ton, which will make it extremely rapid.

Motul UK distributors, Witham Motorsport, were the driving force behind the project. Managing director Nigel Bottom explains: "We have been supplying Motul product to Great British Sports Cars for some time and, having had the chance to meet [boss] Richard [Hall] and tour the factory, I was hugely impressed by the depth of their engineering skill, their innovative ideas and



The GBS Zero sportscar has had input from Motul all the way through the development process

Lightweight chassis will return performance

Highly skilled workers have constructed the car

Branded parts will be bolted on to the sportscar

Ford's Duratec engine provides 240bhp

by the fact that there was potentially a great story to be told on the start-to-finish – and beyond – part that Motul plays in the construction of the GBS Zero. The idea of a Motul-Edition seemed like a logical extension of this so we have embarked on what is a truly novel venture for a lubricant brand."

The Silverstone's Classic has been chosen as the venue for the car to make its public debut for a number of reasons. Motul's UK business development manager Andy Wait explains: "We were delighted only a few weeks ago to announce our partnership with Silverstone for The Classic. It is a huge festival of enthusiast motoring, with more than 100,000 people expected, so we wanted to make our first appearance there memorable and to have the climax of the Motul GBS Zero initiative at Silverstone seems apt.

"Also, of course, the car has a retro look and feel to it, so it fits in well with the spirit of the event, and it will give us the chance to gauge public reaction to the car as well, overall of offering us a great chance to showcase so much of what Motul can offer."

For more information please contact Witham Motorsport:
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Photos:5 Nations British Rallycross, Hal Ridge

CHAMPIONS GO TOE-TO-TOE FOR REVAMPED BRITISH RALLYCROSS SPOILS

This year's 5 Nations competition gets going at Lydden Hill this weekend. By Hal Ridge

Mark Donnelly (right) will be gunning for title

CALENDAR

5 Nations British Rallycross Championship

RND	DATE	VENUE
1	May 29	Lydden Hill, England
2	May 31	Lydden Hill, England
3	July 10-11	Mondello Park, Ireland
4	Aug 29-30	Pembrey, Wales
5	Sep 25-26	Knockhill, Scotland
6	Nov 6-7	Lydden Hill, England
7	Dec 4-5	Spa-Francorchamps, Belgium

Midway through last year, sceptics suggested that those winning titles amid the coronavirus-hit season would hold a different place in the history books compared to the winners of previous crowns.

Now, five months into the 2021 campaign, Lewis Hamilton and Sebastien Ogier are both seven-time World champions in Formula 1 and the World Rally Championship respectively and those battles were won without question. Mark Donnelly joined the list of 22 British Rallycross champions last year too and, despite winning the biggest prize in UK rallycross from only three rounds (all at Lydden Hill), his place on the champions list is held in the same regard as the majority of his predecessors.

Donnelly's British Rallycross Championship 5 Nations Trophy crown aboard LD Motorsports' Citroen DS3 was hard fought. On the reigning champion's return in the same car this year, he will face stiffer opposition.

Three former champions will contest the full campaign, with six-time title winner Julian Godfrey the most decorated. Should Godfrey claim the biggest prize this year, in his now aging Ford Fiesta, he will be the outright most successful title-winner in the series' history. He will edge clear of long-time colleague Dermot Carnegie, although the Irish driver remains well clear in the all-time winners list with 32 victories to his credit, 10 more than Godfrey.

The other former title winner, Ollie O'Donovan, will race a brand new Proton Iriz RX in the series this year derived from a Mellors Elliot Motorsport R5 rally machine. But, with the car yet to be completed, the London-based Irishman, who claimed the trophy in 2007, will campaign his faithful Ford Fiesta in the opening double-header of the year at Lydden Hill this weekend.

Donnelly has four rallycross Supercar starts to his name and one win at Lydden Hill, while Godfrey has incredibly only scored one of his 22 career wins at the circuit. O'Donovan, who has 14 total wins, has been far more successful at the Kent venue with five victories to his credit in British RX events at the oldest rallycross circuit in the world.

Steve Hill is also a former British rallycross event-winner and has twice won at Lydden. Two of the names set to return this year – Andy Scott (Peugeot 208) and Kevin Procter (Ford Fiesta) – can both be considered title contenders should they race in the full campaign and are tied on seven career wins apiece.

Julian Godfrey will be chasing record-breaking seventh British title

Andy Scott will make a return in a single-car Albatec entry for 2021

Slawomir Woloch will chase Supernational glory

Scott's Albatec team won the British crown with triple British Rally champion Mark Higgins in 2018 and, following a period on the sidelines from driving himself, two-time Lydden Hill victor Scott will drive the sole Albatec Racing Supercar entry this season.

The year after Higgins' title win, European champion Derek Tohill raced in his so-far only British RX campaign (*see sidebar*) and, armed with his Olsbergs MSE-built Ford Fiesta, only just lost out on the crown to Godfrey in the last knockings of the year, in part thanks to a broken windscreen washer pipe in the final weekend.

Three-time Supernational Rallycross champion Tristan Ovenden and former Supernational racer Mike Sellar both graduated to Supercar in last year in Citroen DS3s and have made steps over the winter to take a performance leap forward. Roger Thomas (Ford Fiesta) and Simon Horton (Subaru Impreza) were among those to be forced onto the sidelines last year due to reasons surrounding the pandemic, but will return to action this season.

Reigning Super1600 title winner Roberts Vitols will use his prize drive to race an LD Motorsports Citroen C4 Supercar in his top-flight debut this weekend, while Connor McCloskey (Ford Focus) and Oliver Bennett (BMW Mini) will make selected appearances. From the second round at Mondello Park in Ireland in July, a number of Irish campaigners will join the field including Declan Kelly (Ford Fiesta) and Tommy Graham (Ford Fiesta).

Electric cars developed by Austrian firm STARD and first run in the Projekt E support series to the World Rallycross Championship last year will be thrown into the mix in the Supercar division. Natalie Barratt and Chris Hoy are working on plans to race the machines which produce equivalent performance to conventional internal combustion engine Supercars during the season.

The 5 Nations British Rallycross Championship package also includes the two-wheel-drive Supernational class, Super 1600, single-make categories for Junior racers, Suzuki Swifts, BMW Minis and RX150 buggies, while the Retro Rallycross class caters for period machinery and the new Electro category has been introduced for production-based EVs. ■

Why Tohill will be on a mission in 2021

When Irishman Derek Tohill stepped up to the European Rallycross Championship in 2008 as a van-and-trailer effort in the Production-based Division Two category, it was a huge logistical step up for a driver who had only previously raced in the UK and Ireland.

He has since become a regular Euro RX racer (and title-winner) and, for one year in 2014, raced in World RX too.

But, 2021 poses a whole new challenge of racing in British RX in the current state of the world. But, the multiple Irish champion has unfinished business in British RX. He just missed out on the title in 2019 and is more eager than ever to compete.

"The biggest challenge for the 2021 British Championship is to just get there. If we can manage that, then we will have won our own battle against Covid and Brexit," he said.

"The next challenge is to get some seat time to feel comfortable in the car again, unlike most of the British RX field, we have had only one event in the past 12 months. Myself, the car and the team will be a little rusty but it's just like riding a bicycle – we'll take our time to get back into the swing of things but hopefully we'll be in the mix come the final of round one."

Tohill hopes his entry to the double-header at Lydden this weekend will help pave the way for more UK-Irish competition in the near future.

"I feel it's important to compete at Lydden as it will be a recce for other Irish drivers to hopefully compete in rounds later in the championship," he says. "I believe it's very important to support British RX too as it's supporting Irish rallycross by visiting Mondello Park in July. Covid permitting that should be an amazing event."

Rain was the deciding factor in Tohill's bid for the 2019 BRX

RACING REPORTS

Photos: Steve Jones

DONINGTON PARK: 750MC BY IAN SOWMAN — MAY 22-23

Sibbons took advantage in the second Ma7da race

RACE WINNERS

Ma7da
Race 1: Jonathan Lisseter; **Race 2:** Daniel Sibbons

750 Formula
Races 1 and 2: David Bartholomew (PRS 1b)

Sports Specials
Race 1: Paul Boyd (Eclipse SM1); **Race 2:** Andy Hiley (Chronos HR1S)

Alfa Romeo
Races 1 and 2: Barry McMahon (156)

Clio 182
Races 1, 2 and 3: Jack Kingsbury

BMW Car Club Racing
Races 1 and 2: Brad Sheehan (BMW E46 M3)

116 Trophy
Anthony Seddon/Alan Corfield

Toyota MR2
Race 1: Shaun Traynor (Mk3); **Race 2:** Paul Hinson (Mk2)

F1000
Race 1: Matthew Booth; **Race 2:** Elliott Mitchell

Hot Hatch
Races 1 and 2: Alistair Camp (Honda Civic)

Classic Stock Hatch
Race 1: Lee Scott (Ford Fiesta XR2i); **Race 2:** Stewart Place (Peugeot 205 GTi); **Race 3:** Ben Bateman (Vauxhall Nova GTE)

Historic 750 Formula
Scratch and Handicap Races: Richard Prior (JGS III)

LISSETER WINS IT AND BINS IT IN MA7DA ENCOUNTERS

Barry McMahon's ex-touring car topped the Alfa Romeos

Jonathan Lisseter and Daniel Sibbons shared victories in rounds three and four of the Ma7da championship at Donington.

Lisseter's win was not a major surprise, coming as it did in wet and greasy conditions that suit his style well. He had sat behind Ben Powney for much of the race but passed his team-mate around the outside at Redgate on the penultimate lap, before pulling away. Simon Cort completed a 1-2-3 for the TSR squad.

Lisseter managed less than a mile of race two before plunging into the barriers at the Old Hairpin. Sibbons assumed the lead, going on to take his first car victory. Powney and Cort traded second before the former retired on the final lap with a suspected fuelling issue.

David Bartholomew ran out a comfortable victor in both 750 Formula races in the PRS 1b that he will continue to share through the season with Ed Pither. Chris Gough was second on Saturday, when a drying track and a restart blunted the returning Bill Cowley's hopes as he had opted for wets. He bounced back to take second on Sunday. With reigning champion Peter Bove missing the second race, 2018 and 2019 title winner consolidated his points advantage with a fourth and a third.

Paul Boyd took his Eclipse to victory on his return to the Sports Specials fold, but was caught out at Hollywood on a damp track in race two, although he climbed back from outside the top 20 to fifth. Reigning champion Andy Hiley led throughout in his Chronos, an improvement of one place on his Saturday result. Martin Gambling's Eclipse trailled the Chronos each day, while Silverstone winner Anton Landon was best of the Cyanas.

Barry McMahon's ex-touring car 156 dominated both Alfa Romeo races with George Osborne (75) and Tom Hill (GT) taking a second place and Power Trophy class win apiece. Andrew Bourke stayed well clear of some entertaining battles in the Twin Spark division.

Jack Kingsbury scored a Clio 182 treble, having overcome long-time leader Jack Dwane in the opening contest. David Garside provided stern opposition in race two, but Kingsbury was unchallenged in the curtain-closer. Dwane had arguably his best race of the season so far in that one: he'd also thrown away a lead twice at Cadwell, but climbed from sixth to second this time.

Brad Sheehan, in his E46 M3, won both BMW CCR races. The second was the more interesting, with the prospect that Niall Bradley (E46) and Mike Cutt (E36) – who battled hard for the runner-up spot – might catch him, although they narrowly failed.

Staying with the same marque, 116 Trophy spoils went to Anthony Seddon and Alan Corfield, who timed their mandatory stops perfectly to gain most advantage from two safety car interruptions.

BRISCA F1: KING'S LYNN BY COLIN CASSERLEY — MAY 22

GILBANK GETS BACK TO WINNING WAYS AS BriSCA F1 BATTLES BEGIN AGAIN

Mark Gilbank sat out the Covid-shortened 2020 season but he marked his return to racing with a win at the opening BriSCA F1 meeting of the year at King's Lynn on Sunday.

Gilbank has now won four finals at the Norfolk track and his first was in April 1994.

An opening-lap pile-up took out many of the fancied runners and allowed Willie Skoyles Jr to grab the lead.

Gilbank, who had avoided the early skirmishes, began to close in on the race leader and made his move shortly after a mid-race restart.

Dan Johnson and Tom Harris zeroed in on the leader but Gilbank held on for the victory despite a last-bend attack from Johnson.

The winner said: "The car was good. I run a big-block engine and I have proved you don't need a small block, all you need to do is concentrate on the package. I must be doing something right to beat Johnson and Harris. I had a big crash here in 2019, so it is good to be back and good to see the fans back too."

Johnson, who had earlier won his heat race, said: "We altered the brakes after the heat, the car was going well when the track was wet but when it dried it was rubbish.

"I knew Tom Harris was behind me so didn't want to take myself out of the race on the last bend, for the first race of the year I am happy with second place."

Results
Organiser: Trackstar: **When:** May 22 **Where:** King's Lynn **Starters:** 66
1 Mark Gilbank; 2 Dan Johnson; 3 Tom Harris; 4 Ryan Harrison; 5 Willie Skoyles Jr; 6 James Morris; 7 Lee Fairhurst; 8 Mal Brown; 9 Austin Moore; 10 Paul Hines

Photo: Colin Casserley

Gilbank loved his big block power

AUTOTEST: BY DUNCAN STEPHENS — MAY 16

ALL THAT METTERS IS GOLDEN FOR JASON ON RETURNING CAMEL VALE AUTOTEST

Jason Metters won the May Camel Vale Motor Club Autotest in very wet slippery conditions from young Liam Hartley after a late venue find by the organisers limited the entry somewhat.

The conditions meant it was extremely challenging to find grip from and 24 tests were completed by the select few.

Club champion Metters led all afternoon in his rebuilt Peugoet 205GTi from Hartley, who had replaced the clutch in his Peugeot 206 since the previous months event and defied his lack of experience on the tests. Hartley is more used to being the passenger in Sporting Trials, so used the crossover knowledge of hunting for traction to his benefit and the was the star of the event.

Wayne Grimshaw debuted his new 1800cc Vauxhall Corsa to complete the podium. The wet ground didn't suit the Mazda MX-5 of president Roger Hoskin, who could only manage fourth overall. He was ahead of Adam Ingleheart, who had won overall in April. Jemma Hoskin finished just seven seconds behind.

Results
Camel Vale Motor Club Autotest
Organiser: Camel Vale MC **When:** May 16 **Where:** Cardinham, Bodmin **Starters:** 6
1 Jason Metters (Peugeot 205GTi) 1151 seconds; 2 Liam Hartley (Peugeot 206) 1237s; 3 Wayne Grimshaw (Vauxhall Corsa); 4 Roger Hoskin (Mazda MX-5); 5 Adam Ingleheart (Ford Focus ST); 6 Jemma Hoskin (Mazda MX-5).

Advertising enquiries: 01732 446757

RACING REPORTS

Photos: Mick Walker

SILVERSTONE: HSCC BY MARCUS PYE — MAY 22-23

FLYING CALUM LOCKIE LANDS A GOLDEN TREBLE

GT and Sport Car Cup victory went to Thomas and Lockie

Miles Griffiths goes around the outside to maintain the lead in Historic F2 battles

Three wins for Calum Lockie were among the highlights of the Historic Sports Car Club's International Trophy event on Silverstone's Grand Prix circuit.

The Scot won both Thundersports blasts in the Dodkins brothers' March-Chevrolet 717 – Sunday's boldly in the wet – and competed his hat-trick over a magical GT and Sports Car Cup hour in Julian Thomas' Jaguar E-type.

Lockie's Thundersports pursuers Dean Forward and Warren Briggs (McLaren M8F and M8E) both survived wild spins on Saturday, when veteran John Burton (Chevron B26) snatched two-litre gold from Tony Sinclair (Lola T292) on the line.

Thomas sowed Calum's GTSCC seeds, scrapping with Kiwi Roger Wills (ex-Bruce McLaren Lotus 15). David Clark leapt from a Porsche 911 into the Lotus and kept second, clear of Graeme and James Dodd (E-type). Mark Holme/Jeremy Welch (ex-John Gott Austin-Healey 3000) and Jack and Billy Bellinger (Morgan 4/4) won GT3 and GT2, Billy having denied Joe Ward/Chris Conoley (TVR Grantura).

Andy Newall hurled Drs Peter Taggart and Tony Goodwin's Chevron B6 to a half-minute victory over Westie and Ben Mitchell's B8 in Saturday's HSCC Guards Trophy championship opener. Richard Piper (Brahma) and Gonçalo Gomes/James Claridge (Lotus 23B) chased hard. John Spiers (TVR Griffith) was first GT on the road, but a short stop penalty dropped him behind Mike Whitaker and Peter Thompson's 'Griffs'. Triple champ John Davison was again the Lotus Elan crackshot.

Miles Griffiths blitzed both F2 races in Philip Walker's Ralt RT1, but the scraps behind him were sensational. Matt Wrigley (Chevron B42) regained second from Frazer Gibney (B40) with Manfredo Rossi (March 762) and Glenn Eagling (GRD 273) in tow on Saturday. Matthew Watts (debuting his Marc Surer-liveried March 782) worked overtime to repel Andy Smith (742) and Martin Stretton (712) who both charged from the back.

In Historic FF1600, where the chases of Cam Jackson were equally frenetic, Merlyn-mounted Callum Grant and Ben Mitchell came closest with a second apiece, in feisty Horatio Fitz-Simon's company. Michael Lyons dominated Saturday's Aurora Trophy, but day one retiree Mark Dwyer easily won Sunday's very thin wet race from the back.

Andy Smith was at his brilliant best in Classic F3, twice outrunning Benn Tilley (March 743) and Tony Hancock (Lola T670) and rewarding his team who changed a weeping crankshaft oil seal between races. Murray Shepherd in Hancock's Van Diemen RF82 aced the FF2000 section.

Simon Garrad was the Dunlop Saloon Car Cup standout in his Nissan Skyline, but Ric Wood's sister car and the Ford Sierra Cosworths of Dave Coyne, Paul Mensley and Sean Brown kept Garrad focused, with superstar Steve Soper (BMW E36 M3) in their midst.

Morgan +8s won both Road Sports races, Will Plant heading father Richard in the '70s set. John Williams split them until his Porsche 911SC faded as the track became damp again. After a scrape with Paul Tooms (Elan) into Copse at the start Robin Pearce won the soggy Historic contest in which spins at Copse and Village unzipped Kevin Kivlochan's AC Cobra hopes. 'KeKi' salvaged second superbly, ahead of Davison's S1 Elan.

RACE WINNERS

Historic Formula 2
Races 1&2: Miles Griffiths (Ralt RT1)

Thundersports
Races 1&2: Calum Lockie (March 717)

Historic Formula Ford
Races 1&2: Cameron Jackson (Winkelmann WDF2)

Classic F3
Races 1&2: Andy Smith (March 783)

Dunlop Saloon Car Cup
Races 1&2: Simon Garrad (Nissan Skyline R32)

Historic Touring Cars
Races 1&2: Dan Williamson (Ford Falcon)

Guards Trophy
Andy Newall (Chevron B6)

70s Road Sports
William Plant (Morgan +8)

Historic Road Sports
Robin Pearce (Morgan +8)

Aurora/Geoff Lees Trophy
Race 1: Michael Lyons (Lola T400); **Race 2:** Mark Dwyer (March 742)

GT and Sports Car Cup
Julian Thomas/Calum Lockie (Jaguar E-type)

MALLORY PARK: BRSCC BY GARY JAMES — MAY 22

RILEY AND ALLEN SHARE SUPERKART VICTORIES

Photos: Rachel Bourne

Geoff Newman was forced to look to his mirrors to hang on to Caterham glory

Despite a disappointing entry, there was no shortage of action in the opening rounds of the Motorsport UK British Superkart Championship races.

Ross Allen (Division 1) and Tom Riley (F125 Open) were unbeaten in their respective classes, with Allen almost taking three outright wins.

In the opening encounter, Allen battled with Carl Kinsey (Division 1) with the lead changing on several occasions. Kinsey led until five laps from the flag when a slight misfire slowed him and allowed Allen to win by 3.7s.

In the F250 National class, Kirk Cattermole gained the upper hand over Lee Plain. In F125 Open, Riley had an untroubled run to the flag. Mark Gellatly was top in F450.

The second race was interrupted by rain at half distance. Allen had been leading but was caught by Gellatly. Allen then had an excursion across the grass at Gerard's on the last lap but still took the Division 1 class win, while Plain pipped Gellatly at the flag to take overall victory.

Gellatly elected for slicks on a still damp track for the final race and skated off at Gerard's on the first lap. Kinsey led for six laps until a water hose came off and he retired. That left Allen with a commanding lead to claim class win number three. Cattermole was second until the final lap when he tripped over a backmarker at the Esses. That handed the F250 National class win to Plain with Riley comfortably ahead of the opposition in F125 Open. McClintock took the F450 class win.

The first race for the Caterham Academy was a thriller with six cars all in contention. Marc Jones moved up from seventh to contest the lead with Geoff Newman. After running side by side on several occasions Jones dropped back slightly.

At the flag it was a blanket finish with Newman just getting the verdict from Chris Fraser, Jones, and Mark Kendle. William James had an easy win in the second race.

RACE WINNERS

British Superkart
Race 1&3: Ross Allen (Jade IAME); **Race 2:** Lee Plain (Anderson DEA)

Caterham Academy Championship Green Group
Geoff Newman

Caterham Academy Championship White Group
William James

Northern & Super Classic Formula Ford Championship
Race 1: Nigel Dolan (Van Diemen JL012K); **Race 2:** George McDonald (Swift SC92F)

Track Attack Race Club
Race 1: Tony Hunter (Renault Clio); **Race 2:** Andrew Neal (Peugeot 106 Rallye)

OULTON PARK: MGCC BY MARK PAULSON — MAY 22

SECOND GENERATION SHORT FINALLY CONVERTS HIS MG PACE INTO GLORY

Photo: Mick Walker

Short won the second race

Having led each of the first three races of the season, Morgan Short finally claimed his maiden win in the MG Cup's second contest at Oulton Park.

After qualifying his MG ZS on pole position in the wet, race one would be Short's first-ever dry laps of the circuit. He lost out when Mike Williams's Rover Metro outdragged him up Clay Hill on the first lap and was determined not to make the same mistake in race two. As Williams drew alongside, Short held firm and Williams dropped time as he ran onto the grass. But Williams fought back and latched onto the leader after Short clobbered Neil Burnett's Metro, which lost drive exiting Knickerbrook, making for a nervy finish.

"I knew that as long as I had some grip and the engine was still working I could defend from him," said Short. "I had a great race with Mike. He's a great competitor and he's a good sport."

After a yellow flag infringement in qualifying, Matt Simpson charged from the back of the grid to third – having managed fourth in the opener – while Mark Eales twice took the honours in the concurrent Metro Cup.

Ollie Neaves was a double victor in BCV8 but was hampered by a poor tyre choice for the opener which he won only after Neil Fowler fell off on the final lap and a penalty for jumping a restart cost Simon Cripps victory by less than 0.25 seconds.

Sam Kirkpatrick and Fred Burgess continued their battle for MG Trophy supremacy, Kirkpatrick coming from behind to win race two – as the pair traded lap records – after a slightly more comfortable earlier success.

Ray Collier won both Cockshoot Cup encounters as Keith Egar's tyre gamble in qualifying left his MG Midget twice battling to second position from mid-grid.

RACE WINNERS

MG Cup/MG Metro Cup
Race 1: Mike Williams (Rover Metro VVC); **Race 2:** Morgan Short (MG ZS 180)

BCV8
Races 1 & 2: Ollie Neaves (B GT V8)

MG Trophy
Races 1 & 2: Sam Kirkpatrick (ZR 190)

Cockshoot Cup
Races 1 & 2: Ray Collier (MG ZR 190)

Equipe Libre
Jamie Boot (TVR Griffith)

Equipe GTS
Mark Holme (MGB)

Equipe Pre-'63/50s
Mark Holme (Austin-Healey 3000 Mk2)

WHAT'S ON

YOUTUBE

All's fair in love and war. And Formula 1. Well not quite, in any of those cases. And in something bound to make a lot of us feel old, today (Thursday) is exactly 15 years on from a notorious case of F1 boundary stretching. Monaco's qualifying in 2006 and Michael Schumacher's parking offence.

As the clock ticked down Schumi's was the fastest time, but his final effort wasn't good. Then it got worse as at Rascasse he slid inelegantly straight, stopped just short of the barrier, then stalled. Helpfully the resultant yellow flags impeded others' improvements.

Schumacher insisted it was a mistake but plenty of observers reckoned it didn't look like that. The stewards agreed with the latter and sent Michael to the back.

And YouTube lets you peer back at the fallout, captured in ITV's pre-race coverage. Various luminaries – including Jackie Stewart, Mark Blundell and several of Schumi's fellow drivers – give their views. There are contributions from Flavio Briatore and Nico Rosberg for irony fans. It's all at youtube.com/watch?v=VgCY548M2QQ or from searching 'Schumacher's Qualifying Drama at Monaco GP 2006'.

Graham Keilloh

Saint or sinner? Schumacher

TV GUIDE

On another busy weekend of motorsport action, headlined by Sunday's Indianapolis 500, if you don't catch all of it our friends in TV scheduling helpfully offer the chance to watch the best bits.

Starting at the top, Sky Sports F1 shows Indy 500 highlights on Tuesday at 2100hrs-2200hrs and again later that evening at 2300hrs-0000hrs.

There also are highlights of the second-ever Extreme E meeting, this one in Dakar. You can check out Saturday's qualifying early the next day on Sky Sports Mix at 0800hrs-0830hrs or later that morning at 1030hrs-1100hrs. Then there are more highlights, including the event's semi-finals, on Sky Sports Action and Mix at 1330hrs-1430hrs.

And full-weekend Extreme E highlights are on during Monday's very early hours (0000hrs-0100hrs on Sky Sports Mix) and repeated several times on Monday to Wednesday.

Who will claim Indy trophy?

Back on Sky Sports F1 there's also the chance to check out the best of last weekend's British GT Brands Hatch season-opener. It's on this evening (Thursday) at 2100hrs-2200hrs and repeated across the forthcoming days.

And there's even more GT highlights action on Sky Sports F1 on Monday catching up with the weekend's GT World Challenge Europe round, Paul Ricard's 1000km race, at 2100hrs-2300hrs.

Graham Keilloh

LIVE TV

INDYCAR INDIANAPOLIS 500
Race: Sunday, 1545hrs-2100hrs, Sky Sports F1

EXTREME E OCEAN X PRIX DAKAR, SENEGAL
Qualifying 1 and 2: Saturday, 1230hrs-1430hrs, Sky Sports Action
Race: Sunday, 1500hrs-1700hrs, ITV, BT Sport 2, Sky Sports Action and Mix

V8 SUPERCARS WINTON
Race 1: Saturday, 0630hrs-0815hrs, BT Sport/ESPN
Race 2: Sunday, 0230hrs-0415hrs, BT Sport 1
Race 3: Sunday, 0615hrs-0800hrs, BT Sport/ESPN

FERRARI CHALLENGE EUROPE BRNO
Race 1: Saturday, 1100hrs-1200hrs, Sky Sports F1
Race 2: Sunday, 1000hrs-1100hrs, Sky Sports F1

NASCAR CHARLOTTE
Race: Sunday, 2230hrs-0300hrs, Premier Sports 1

LISTINGS

FRIDAY-SUNDAY
■ **Silverstone, Northants**
C1 24-Hour: C1, Caterham Graduates, Sports Prototypes **Starts** Friday, qualifying from 2000hrs Saturday, racing from 1215hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing continues **Admission** £14 **Web** silverstone.co.uk **Advance tickets only**

SATURDAY
■ **Kirkistown, N Ireland**
500MRCI meeting: FF1600, Saloons/GTs, Roadsports, Fiestas/Mazda MX-5s, Superkarts Starts racing from 1300hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) **Public admission to be confirmed**

SATURDAY-SUNDAY
■ **Brands Hatch, Kent**
Masters Historic Festival: Historic F1, Endurance Legends, Masters Historic Sports, Gentleman Drivers, Pre 66 Touring Cars, Pre 66 Minis, Equipe Libre Starts Saturday, racing from 1455hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 1005hrs **Admission** adult £25, under 13 free **Web** msv.com **Contact** 0843 453 9000 **Advance tickets only**
■ **Donington Park, Leics**
CSCC meeting: Tin Tops, Swinging Sixties, Future Classics, Magnificent 7s, Modern Classics, Special Saloon and Modsports, Classic K, New Millennium, Open Series, Turbo Tin Tops, Slicks Series **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1240hrs (qualifying from 0915hrs) Sunday, racing from 1235hrs (qualifying from 0915hrs) **Admission** adult £14, under 13 free **Web** msv.com **Contact** 0843 453 9000 **Advance tickets only**
■ **Croft, N Yorks**
750MC meeting: Club Enduro, Formula Vee, Formula 1000, Locost, 5Club MX-5, Type R Trophy, Roadsports, Bike Sports **Starts** Saturday, racing from tba (qualifying from 0930hrs) Sunday, racing from 1200hrs **Admission** adult £15, under 15 free **Web** croftcircuit.co.uk **Contact** 01325 721815 **Advance tickets only**

MONDAY
■ **Castle Combe, Wilts**
CCRC meeting: Touring Car Trophy, FF1600, Saloons, GT, Hot Hatch, MGOC, Sprites/Midgets **Starts** racing from 1225hrs (qualifying from 0830hrs) **Admission** adult £15, under 16 free **Web** castlecombecircuit.co.uk **Advance tickets only**
■ **Donington Park, Leics**
BARC meeting: Kumho BMWs, Mighty Minis, Jaguars, Blue Oval Saloons/Classic Thunder, Pre '66/Pre '83 Classic Touring Cars, Pre '93/Pre 03 Classic Touring Cars **Starts** racing from 1150hrs (qualifying from 0910hrs) **Admission** adult £14, under 13 free **Web** msv.com **Contact** 0843 453 9000 **Advance tickets only**

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ART EDITOR MIKE STOKOE'S FAVOURITE OF THE WEEK!

Ben Lawrence, 11, captured this classic pressing on

Thundersports in '83, by Graham Lomax

Masters Historic Legends '18, by Gary Hill

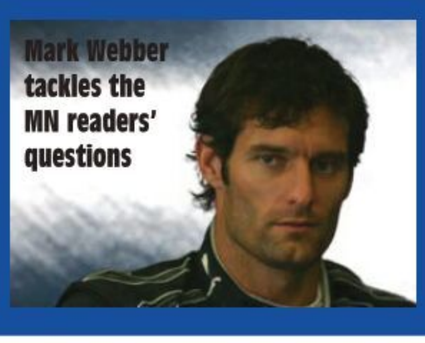
David Harbey was at Goodwood 2019

More from David Harbey – pedal power

NEXT WEEK — OUT THURSDAY, JUNE 3

*Correct at time of going to press

READERS' Q&A: AUSSIE GRIT



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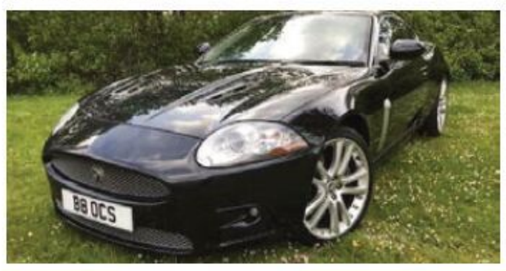

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